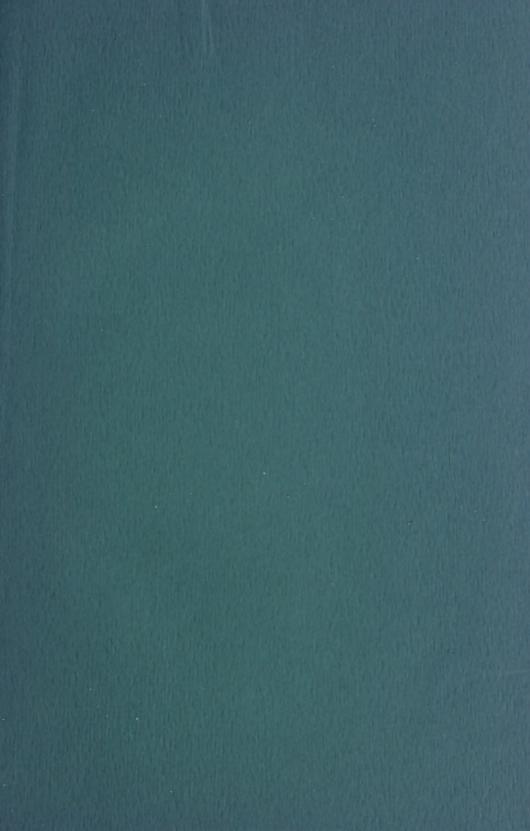


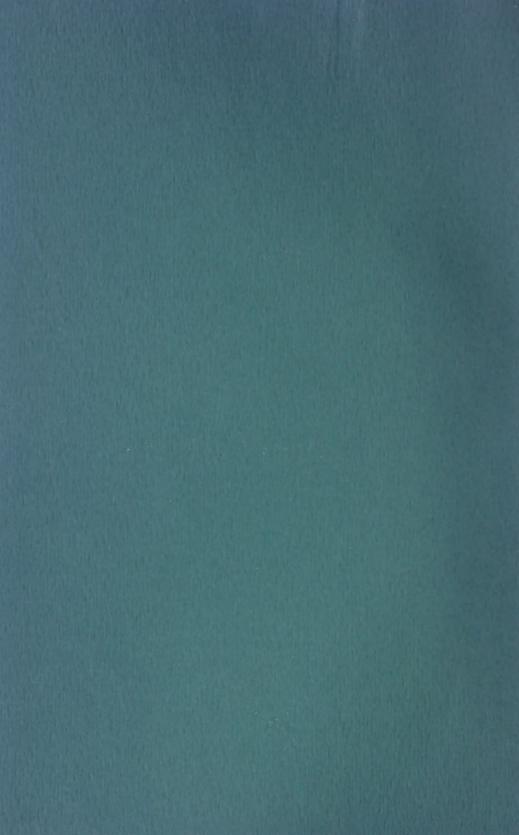
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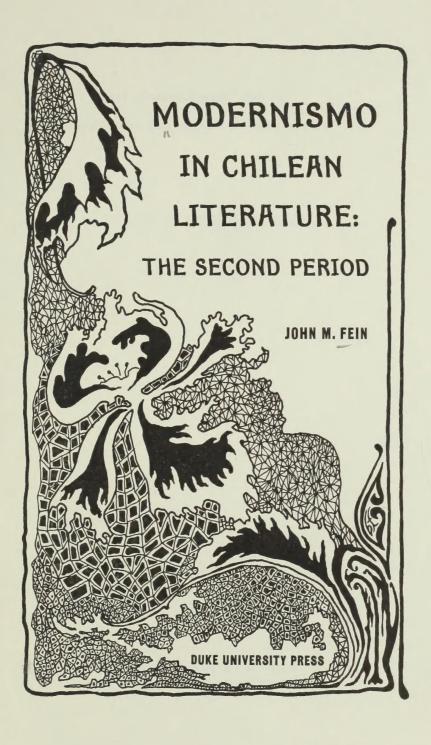
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MODERNISMO IN CHILEAN LITERATURE: THE SECOND PERIOD

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FOR MY MOTHER AND FATHER



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INTRODUCTION

The second period of the *modernista* movement in Chile, its development after the departure of Rubén Darío, is generally a neglected corner of that country's literature. With the exception of Armando Donoso, who approached it through the study of individual authors, most critics have passed over the period. If one considers not only the drama which accompanies the inauguration of any movement, but also the continental prestige which Darío's work elsewhere attracted, the critics cannot be blamed too much. Nonetheless, the two decades of the second period are of significance not only to Chile but to the growth of *modernismo* as a Hispanic phenomenon. The variations that are tolerated—even, in this case, encouraged—by an international literary reform necessarily enter into an evaluation of the movement's importance.

The purpose of the first chapter is not so much to present new facts as to give a panoramic view of the period, to establish its chronology, leadership, and dominant currents, and to compare and contrast it with

the first period, the years 1886 to 1889.

The second and third chapters take up the study of two literary periodicals that are unavailable in the United States. Revista cómica was as significant for the beginning of the second period of modernismo in Chile as Pluma y lápiz was for its full development. I am grateful to Professor Raúl Silva Castro for calling my attention to Revista cómica and for his co-operation in securing microfilm copies of both periodicals from the Biblioteca Nacional in Santiago. In these chapters the main purpose has been not only to provide the basic editorial information and a general description of contents, authorship, and orientations, but also, by defining their contributions, to place the periodicals within the framework of the Chilean movement as a whole.

The final chapter focuses attention on an unjustly forgotten author—forgotten partially because he was so closely linked with the modernista movement that his reputation suffered from the general lack of attention to this period. The extent of the bibliography on Francisco Contreras (see Appendix C) indicates that many have written about him, but that few have done so in recent years, and that none has attempted a comprehensive evaluation of his life and work. Since his achievements can be measured best only in conjunction with

the literary movement which he helped to launch, perhaps this chapter will contribute to a more favorable judgment of his place in literary history. I am particularly obliged to Alberto Viviani, a nephew of Contreras, for a number of sources used in this chapter, and for the loan of the only copy of Raúl that I was able to locate in Chile.

The Appendix contains four sections: (1) Contreras' introduction to Raúl, a rare document of considerable interest to literary historians; (2) the complete index of the Revista cómica, which is offered as a supplement to one of the most useful reference works to appear in recent years, Sturgis E. Leavitt's Revistas hispanoamericanas; índice bibliográfico, 1843-1935; (3) a bibliography of works by and about Francisco Contreras; and (4) a list of other works consulted in the

preparation of the present volume.

The expression of deepest gratitude is extended not only to the individuals and organizations named here, but to all who helped me with my work in Chile. Everywhere I found a spirit of good will and co-operation that was heartwarming, and that contributed greatly to the pleasant personal memories of my stay. In particular, I am indebted to Father Alfonso Escudero, whose library and file of newspaper clippings are unique, and to Professor Raúl Silva Castro, who placed the resources of the Sección Chilena at my disposal. A number of others, such as Augusto Iglesias and señoras María Flora Yáñez de Echeverría, Olympia F. de Rocuant, and Paulina Philippi de Gutiérrez, were kind enough either to supply useful materials or to help me establish contact with writers and critics. Most of all, I am profoundly grateful to the Comisión Fulbright for the lectureship which supported research in Chile during 1957 and 1958, and to the Duke University Council on Research for its generous publication subsidy.

I cannot help considering this book a token that I would like to give to Chile in memory of a year that was happy for my family because of the warmth of Chileans in general and of our friends in particular. If information is given here that throws light on a somewhat obscure period of literary history, and if Chile's part in the continental movement of *modernismo* is clarified, the purpose

of the book will have been achieved.

J.M.F.

Duke University Durham, North Carolina

MODERNISMO IN CHILEAN LITERATURE: THE SECOND PERIOD





The history of modernismo in Chile revolves easily around the axis of one event, the residence of Rubén Darío in Santiago and Valparaíso from 1886 to 1889. Indeed, the date of Darío's departure, February 9, 1889, may be considered the dividing line between two distinct, although unequal, periods in the movement's growth: the first, under Darío's leadership, which is the genesis of the movement as a whole; and the second, without the poet's guidance, a period of Chilean literature little known and seldom studied in connection with the development of modernismo as a continental phenomenon. A number of studies, especially those of Raúl Silva Castro, culminating in his Rubén Darío a los veinte años (1956), are a valuable contribution to scholarship on the first period. The second period remains, with few exceptions, unexplored territory. The difference between the two may be thought of in terms of the Pied Piper-Darío, of course—who went piping out of Chile to inaugurate a new period of modernismo in Buenos Aires, drawing along poets and scholars after him. And what occurred in Hamelin after the Pied Piper left? That, in short, is the subject of the present chapter.

There are a number of characteristics of the second period in Chile which define it and set it off from other generations and nationalities. Perhaps the most obvious is a stunted chronology. After Azul, no significant poetic work appeared in Chile until Pedro Antonio González published Ritmos in 1895. Ritmos,

furthermore, is an island in time. The resurgence of modernista activity began with the books of Francisco Contreras (Esmaltines, 1897, and Raúl, 1902), Antonio Bórquez Solar (Campo lírico, 1900), Miguel Luis Rocuant (Brumas, 1902), Manuel Magallanes Moure (Facetas, 1902, and Matices, 1904), and the poems of Carlos Pezoa Véliz published during these years but not collected until much later. In other words, during a decade after the publication of Azul, only two significant books of modernista poetry appeared in Chile. The period of greatest production was between 1900 and 1904.

This twisted chronology is the most external and hence most obvious characteristic of the second period. Others that will be examined in this chapter derive not only from the themes of this poetry, but also from its geographic isolation, absence of leadership, and lack of cohesion. All of these have some explanation in their relationship to the first period of the movement. In spite of the chronological gap that separates the two so widely from 1889 to 1895, they are really quite intimately connected. In fact, the second period cannot be evaluated without knowledge of the first, and perhaps new insight into the first—particularly into the lack of response to the literary revolution that was taking place—may be obtained through knowing the second.

All who have studied the immediate reception of Azul agree that it was at first generally ignored by the public in Chile. If it had not been for the famous letter of Don Juan Valera, reproduced in Chile in January of 1889 just before Darío's departure, and later used as the book's preface, Azul might have been forgotten for a number of years. As one critic expressed it, "a pesar de la originalidad y la belleza del libro, su publicación pasó casi inadvertida, encontrando apenas desmayados ecos." There was, to be sure, the published controversy between the writer of the book's first preface, Eduardo de la Barra, and Darío's close friend and public defender, Manuel Rodríguez Mendoza, but it was as brief as it was intense, and had no lasting literary repercussions.

I. Obras de juventud de Rubén Darío, ed. Armando Donoso, p. 96.

The general lack of critical attention to Azul has been attributed to the fact that most of its contents had appeared previously in newspapers since the end of 1886, where they had been duly read and admired.²

The most notable feature in the reaction to Azul was the lack of imitations. Whether it was because the intellectual atmosphere was unfavorable to all literature or because of the lack of poetic talent, or whether one measures the silence as five years or ten years (compare, for example, Latorre, La literatura de Chile, p. 163, and Donoso, Nuestros poetas, p. xv), the fact remains that in Chile there was no immediate seconding of Darío's new style of writing during the period when a desire for renovation was affecting the rest of the continent.

To a great extent, Chile seemed to forget about Darío, at least until well after the turn of the century. The fault was probably more the poet's than the country's. Darío was at best a sporadic correspondent whose letters to Chile seemed to be motivated by some special situation rather than by the desire to keep in touch with acquaintances to whom he was deeply indebted for many kindnesses. In one of the notes to A. de Gilbert, for example, Darío reprinted a section of an article in which Eduardo Poirier complained that no one had heard from Darío in the four months since he had left Chile. Poirier was not only the first friend that Darío met in Chile and the last to whom he said goodbye, but also one of the most loyal and devoted. Darío in this same note does not hesitate to call him "uno de los rarísimos corazones grandes y nobles que en mi vida he encontrado." The author of Azul defended himself, but not very convincingly:

Rubén es un ingrato...se olvida de los amigos... No escribe...Sí, todos, o casi todos vosotros, mis amigos, os quejáis de mí, con harta justicia al parecer.

Sed indulgentes. Sí os asomáis al fondo, veréis claridad. Llevado por el viento como un pájaro; sin afecciones, sin

^{2.} Obras escogidas de Rubén Darío, ed. Julio Saavedra Molina, p. 127. For analyses of the controversy over Azul, see Obras de juventud de Rubén Darío, ed. Armando Donoso, pp. 97-102, and Raúl Silva Castro, Rubén Darío a los veinte años, pp. 222-227.

familia, sin hogar, teniendo desde casi niño sobre mis hombros el peso de mi vida; fatigado desde temprano por verdaderas tristezas, guardo en lo profundo de mi ser bondad, mucho cariño, mucho amor. No seáis injustos. Yo tengo por únicos sostenes mis esperanzas, mis sueños de gloria. Esto me libra de ser escéptico, de ser ingrato, del vahido siniestro del abismo del mal. Yo creo en Dios. Y así voy en el mundo, por un camino de peregrinación, viendo siempre mi miraje, en busca de mi ciudad sagrada, donde está la princesa triste, en su torre de marfil.³

The implication certainly was that he was an artist, and that artists should not be bound by the same courtesies as other mortals.

The occasions that Darío had for publishing his memories of Chile were the deaths of Arturo Edwards and of Pedro Balmaceda, the writing of the prologue to Narciso Tondreau's Asonantes, and articles about the revolution in Chile. The first three events, however, took place in 1889, that is, when Darío's recollections of Chile were fresh and his feeling of indebtedness strong. But by 1895 when he wrote his bitter confidential letter to Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza, his memory was dim and the feeling of obligation reduced to a minimum. Raúl Silva Castro has expressed well the psychological process that probably took place:

Los seis años corridos entre 1889 y 1895, ricos en viajes, en aventuras, en obras, en nuevos conocimientos, en amistades nuevas, son suficientes para que el autor de *Prosas profanas*, festejado en Buenos Aires, disputado en salones, ateneos y clubes, sintiera de pronto que su vida chilena había sido escasa, pobre y hasta, si se quiere, vergonzante. Para condenar a Chile le es preciso olvidar que él mismo se había mostrado entre nosotros bastante atrevido por sus costumbres noctámbulas, su amor a los éxtasis alcohólicos y la irregularidad de sus hábitos, y que al favor de los poderosos que le distinguieron había respondido en forma esquiva y torpe. Y el poeta—hombre al cabo—entonces olividó.⁴

There were other occasions to recall his stay in Chile, such as writing prefaces for Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza (Gotas de ab-

^{3.} Obras de juventud de Rubén Darío, ed. Armando Donoso, pp. 409-410. 4. Raúl Silva Castro, Rubén Darío a los veinte años, pp. 278-279.

sintio, 1895), Alberto del Solar (El mar en la leyenda y en el arte, 1897), and Francisco Contreras (La piedad sentimental, 1911), but these were composed in answer to requests. There seems to be no evidence that Darío on his own initiative made any attempt to keep in touch with events in Chile subsequent to his departure, either through personal news of his friends or through developments of the literary world. The notable exception is his tribute to Pedro Balmaceda, A. de Gilbert (1890).

It is not surprising, then, that Chilean literary figures tended to reciprocate Darío's forgetfulness and to reflect his feelings of estrangement. The ten years after Darío's departure are lean years indeed from a bibliographical point of view: they include, in addition to the aforementioned prologues to Asonantes (the book was never published) and Gotas de absintio, only seven items by Darío published in Chile during the years 1890-1899, counting two items reprinted from Azul and a four-line fragment, "En un álbum," that was not worth publishing. Perhaps critics in the same period remembered Darío better than he remembered Chile: one finds Gavidia's review of A. de Gilbert, a reprint of Balmaceda's essay on Abrojos (first published in 1887), Manuel Rodríguez Mendoza's articles on the same book, a brief study of the poet's work in Figueroa's Prosistas y poetas de América moderna, Eduardo de la Barra's defense of Darío in answer to the attacks of Clarin, a commentary on "Invernal," an open letter by Luis Orrego Luco when Los raros appeared, and Gómez Carrillo's "A Rubén Darío." There were, to be sure, a few attacks on the author of Azul, some serious and others light, such as Barrantes' and Vásquez Guarda's criticisms of the "Canto épico" and Eduardo de la Barra's good-natured and skilful parodies.⁵

According to Julio Saavedra Molina, there was also a battle in the newspapers early in 1896 about Darío's reputation. In his commentary on Darío's preface to *Gotas de absintio*, Saavedra Molina gave a summary of the opposing opinions:

^{5.} All except the letter by Orrego Luco are listed in *Obras desconocidas de Rubén Darío*, ed. Silva Castro. Domingo Melfi, *El viaje literario*, p. 134, gives the source for the Orrego Luco item as *La tarde*, January 1, 1897.

En la última frase se alude a la fábula de Iriarte (Los huevos): «Gracias al que nos trajo las gallinas». Fueron esta frase y la publicación de *Ritmos* de Pedro A. González el pretexto de que se valió Luis A. Navarrete para zaherir nuevamente a Darío en el artículo que he citado antes (*La libertad electoral*, I, 1896). Parece que entre ambos periodistas perduraba una antigua enemistad. Terció luego don Emilio Rodríguez en defensa de Darío, y otros más, y, en contra, don Eduardo de la Barra. El nicaragüense no olvidó nunca estas ofensas: ya no hubo para él poetas ni cisnes en Chile.⁶

One gathers that there must have been a great deal of personal animus against Darío expressed only in conversation. To what else can one attribute the foolish rumor that Darío was busy in Buenos Aires writing articles against Chile for *La nación* and preparing his "Marcha triunfal" for the victorious entry of Argentine troops into the Chilean capital?⁷

It is interesting that Darío's closest friends in Chile were older than he, in contrast to the young writers who surrounded him when he went on to new literary success in Buenos Aires. Poirier and Manuel Rodríguez Mendoza, his most intimate Chilean friends, were born in 1860 and 1850, respectively, and were thus seven and eight years senior to Darío. Eduardo de la Barra, born in 1839, was the leader of a much older generation. In fact, most of the intellectuals whom Donoso identifies (Obras de juventud de Rubén Dario, p. 38) as members of the tertulia at the offices of La época were well into middle age when Darío had barely reached his majority: Vicente Grez was born in 1847, Federico Puga Borne in 1855, and Augusto Orrego Luco and Luis Montt in 1848.8 Although their names do not figure in the tertulia, other friends may also be mentioned: Carlos Toribio Robinet was fourteen years Darío's senior, as was Pedro Nolasco Préndez, and Carlos Luis Hübner received his law degree the year before Darío's birth.

^{6.} Rubén Darío; poesías y prosas raras, ed. Julio Saavedra Molina, p. 66. 7. Obras de juventud de Rubén Darío, ed. Armando Donoso, p. 98.

^{8.} It has not been possible to find the age of Alberto Blest, son of the famous novelist.

Other friends, to be sure, were contemporaries, or nearly so. Narciso Tondreau, Samuel Ossa Borne, and Galo Irarrázaval were respectively six, five, and four years older. The Huneeus Gana brothers, Luis Orrego Luco, and Alfredo Irarrázaval were almost the same age as Darío. Pedro Balmaceda, born in 1868, was a year younger.

Even more significant is the fact that few of Darío's companions were poets and few attained literary success of any kind. Eduardo de la Barra was, of course, the great exception. Nolasco Préndez, Tondreau, and Grez were minor poets who did not produce much. Luis Orrego Luco was to become famous, but as a novelist. Balmaceda's work was cut off by his death in 1889. Manuel Rodríguez Mendoza's production remains scattered in periodicals. Tondreau's only volume, Penumbras, was "de escasa calidad." Gregorio Ossa was the author of a few plays that no one knows. Alfredo Irarrázaval left a couple of books of humorous verse, and Pedro Nolasco Préndez and Samuel Ossa Borne were the authors of a few slim volumes of poetry.9 Apparently most of Darío's friends—still excepting De la Barra, of course-failed to make a permanent mark in the history of Chilean literature. This, again, forms a striking contrast to the youthful group around Darío in Buenos Aires, who progressed quickly from their literary apprenticeship to become the leaders of their generation.

One of the characteristics of the first phase of Chilean modernismo, then, which necessarily affected the second, was that no one of ability appeared to back up Darío's initiative. The author of Azul doubtless had considerable support and encouragement from his colleagues, and the bibliographical evidence indicates that some attempted to follow his lead. But since enthusiasm can never substitute for talent, their names were soon forgotten. Is it accurate, therefore, to speak of a modernista group for the first period? Except in a purely historical and personal sense, referring to Darío and his friends, it is not. As a literary school,

^{9.} Domingo Melfi, El viaje literario, pp. 128-129.

Chilean *modernismo* in the first period existed only in Darío, for no one was able to second his efforts: there was no worthwhile imitation of *Azul*.

In his Remansos del tiempo (p. 67), Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza (the younger brother of Manuel) recalled that Dario's departure from Santiago for Valparaíso marked the dissolution of the group that frequented La época. Symbolically, this was only the forerunner of a much greater dissolution that took place after the departure of the poet from Chile, the revolution of 1891. Among the different determinants of the second period, this clearly takes precedence. The twisted chronology, the long sterility between the two periods, the slow development of the second period and its groping through uncertainties as if there had been no previous beginning or apprenticeship: all are attributable to the truncation of literature by the war. Above all, this interruption distinguishes Chilean modernismo from the movement in other countries that did not have a national upheaval when literary reform was at the crucial point of development.

The brief duration of the civil war—eight months—was out of proportion to the significance which the event assumed in historical perspective. Exceeded in importance only by the Independence and the War of the Pacific, some seventy years after its conclusion it is still a controversial matter to many Chileans. Its immediate circumference in time, moreover, stretched considerably before and after the time of the conflict. The period of preparation before the outbreak would certainly include all of 1890, and the aftermath extended no less than three years, and perhaps as far as the administration of President Errázuriz to the financial crisis of 1898.

The immediate losses of the war in material terms were disastrous: 10,000 lives, more than 100 million pesos (some have calculated 200 million), and the pillaging of the nation's two largest cities. No estimates, of course, could express the losses in terms of personal bitterness and private sacrifice. Nor did all

political conflict end with the triumph of the opposition; in spite of several acts of amnesty, there were two attempts by the Balmacedistas to seize power, in 1892 and 1893. The newly organized Partido Liberal Democrático, furthermore, drew great support from Balmaceda's followers and showed surprising strength in the elections of 1894. For a number of years there were grave financial difficulties caused by inflation, by problems of credit and exchange, and by the devaluation of the peso, all of which culminated in the "run" on the Banco de Chile in 1898.¹⁰

The effect of the war and of the uncertainties which preceded and followed it was a great silence, not only in the *modernista* movement, but in the entire field of literature. In effect, all literary creativity seems to have been suspended. Donoso recorded the complete absence of serious periodicals, and observed that no one thought of publishing a book. The poets of the old guard were silent, realizing that their time had passed. Only a few pamphlets of bitter political recrimination attracted attention.¹¹ Bórquez Solar described the vacuum similarly in his memoirs:

Por este tiempo, 1893, a raíz de la revolución, parece que el ambiente general de la República no era propicio a las especulaciones artísticas. El desenvolvimiento intelectual pareció detenerse con aquella sangrienta sacudida que experimentara el país, como si después de Concón y La Placilla, y del trágico fin del Presidente Balmaceda, continuara pesando sobre los espíritus una montaña de pesadumbres.¹²

This observation is supported by Vilches' history of literary periodicals in the nineteenth century. Although nine reviews were founded between 1875 and 1889 (including *Revista chilena*, 1875, "la más notable de las publicaciones periódicas hechas en el país"), and eleven in the period 1894 to 1900 (if four are added that were omitted by Vilches, *Lilas y campánulas, San-*

^{10.} Francisco Frías Valenzuela, *Historia de Chile*, IV, 94-95, 264-265. 11. Armando Donoso, ed., *Nuestros poetas*, p. xv.

^{12.} Antonio Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías de antaño," Atenea, II (Nov., 1925), 462.

tiago cómico, Pluma y lápiz, and Luz y sombra), none was founded between October, 1889, and January, 1894.¹³

The hiatus here in Chilean literature provides an opportunity to compare and contrast the two periods of modernismo. The outstanding features, of course, are Darío's presence in the first and his absence in the second. Nor was there anyone in the second to take his place. González had no such ambition-in fact, he had no literary ambition at all, if one may judge from the way in which he wrote as a means of personal expression and then forgot or neglected his manuscripts. Bórquez Solar and Contreras were not too young (Darío was only twenty-one when Azul was published) so much as they were too inexperienced and lacking in talent. Cabrera had the remarkable ability of being a catalytic agent for the modernistas, plus an extraordinary combination of energy and administrative effectiveness which reached its fullest expression in the editorship of Pluma y lápiz. But he was totally lacking in poetic ability, and his prose was always compelled to serve the immediate journalistic needs of the moment. Bearing in mind the failure of Darío's companions to second his efforts, one might say that the first period consisted of a leader without followers, the second of a school without a leader.

There was a difference, too, in the reactions to the literary reform in its two periods. In the first the opposition came from the older generation, and although sincere and even intense, it was also reasoned, logical, and philosophical in its approach. The opposition in the second tended to be emotional and personal. *Modernismo* came to be considered not as a legitimate subject for discussion or persuasion, but as a personal idiosyncrasy or affliction. The difference may be attributed not only to a change of personalities, but also to the character of the times, and to the shift from the general prosperity and comfort of the Balmaceda era to the crises and restlessness of subsequent regimes.

The contrast in the ages of the writers of the two periods

^{13.} Roberto Vilches, "Las revistas literarias del siglo XIX," Revista chilena de historia y geografía, XCI (July-Dec., 1941), 324-355, and XCII (Jan.-June, 1942), 117-159.

doubtless played a part in their differences. As a counterbalance to the youthfulness of Darío, there were the more advanced years of De la Barra and of many of Darío's friends who frequented La época. This was a mixed generation. But the writers of the second period were all young, forming a homogeneous group that was too youthful to have known Darío personally and that consequently could be influenced by his work only across distances of time and space.

Were these writers of the second period more middle-class than those of the first? Domingo Melfi has suggested that there was a noticeable change after the war and that writers did not derive exclusively from the upper classes as they had previously. Whether this theory is applicable here or not is difficult to say, but it does seem that although the bohemianism of Darío himself was tolerated, it certainly was not imitated in the first period. His friends were not only aristocratic but well behaved. The same could not be said for González, to take the most extreme case of the second period. Others of the group certainly were of more humble origin than Darío's friends.

Another minor but interesting difference between the two, and also a commentary on the growth of the facilities for publication, is that the second group relied more on literary reviews as outlets for their work (although still making use of newspapers, particularly *La ley*), while the work of the first appeared almost exclusively in newspapers. Two additional characteristics of the second period that will be examined below are the full development of *decadentismo* (strongly debated during the first period in the arguments between De la Barra and Manuel Rodríguez Mendoza, but not influential in the poetry itself) and a spirit of social awareness.

In spite of these differences, the authors of both periods were motivated by the identical desire for reform that Darío's work had inaugurated, and all looked for inspiration to Darío's sources, the Parnassian and, later, the Symbolist poets of France. Both

^{14.} Domingo Melfi, El viaje literario, p. 12.

groups sought variety and flexibility in poetry, and both were resentful of the unwritten restrictions that had bound Spanish poetry for too long, bringing literary stagnation. Both, finally, were charged with being revolutionary and were the center of controversies about the nature, purpose, and value of decadentismo. The charges and countercharges from 1897 to 1902 have a curiously repetitious ring, as if the participants were unaware that the same debates had taken place after the publication of Azul, and as if the war had not only caused a hiatus in literature, but also erased memories.

* * *

The second period began with the group of writers who surrounded Marcial Cabrera Guerra, a kind of literary magnet for young writers, at the offices of La ley. The latter first appeared on June 10, 1894, and soon occupied the place that La época had filled with the first generation. It is perhaps symbolic of the differences between the two that La ley represented the Partido Radical, just as La época had represented the aristocracy. In fact, only fourteen months passed before its extreme anticlericalism led to the excommunication of its staff. Curiously enough, its political program had an effect on its literary success:

La bullada excomunión decretada para el diario por el Arzobispo de Santiago produjo un resultado paradojal: La ley se apaciguó y buscó reemplazar la clientela que había podido dejar su lectura por temor a las penas espirituales subsiguientes a la excomunión, con el señuelo de la buena literatura. Y de este modo pasó a ser un órgano de las nuevas generaciones literarias, a las cuales pudo vincularse sobre todo merced a los servicios de Marcial Cabrera Guerra, que contaba amigos en ellas.¹⁵

One of Cabrera Guerra's first "discoveries" was Pedro Antonio González. Although he had published poems previously in *La tribuna* and *La vanguardia*, his literary career really began under

^{15.} Raúl Silva Castro, Prensa y periodismo en Chile, p. 310.

the guidance of Cabrera, who practically had to coax and sometimes steal from him the verses that he published in La ley and later in Pluma y lápiz. Whether González was regarded as a true innovator in verse, or admired as a romantic inconoclast, or venerated purely in personal terms because he lived in misery as a bohemian and alcoholic, there is no doubt that this poet awakened the greatest enthusiasm in the younger generation. If only for this reason, completely aside from the quality of his poetry, there is sufficient justification for calling him the father of modern poetry in Chile.

No one has answered yet the plea of Raúl Silva Castro, made thirty years ago, for a study of Darío's influence on the author of *Ritmos*. A definitive study would resolve—or at least put in perspective—some of the contradictory opinions. Federico de Onís, for example, is most negative:

Su vida fué desdichada: la vida del poeta bohemio, alcohólico, miserable y altivo. Por estas cosas y por sus versos sonoros y de fácil y romántica emoción, gozó de gran popularidad en Chile hasta que surgieron los buenos poetas de la generación posterior. Su poesía pudo aparecer a los ojos de sus contemporáneos como innovadora, porque no faltan en ella novedades de expresión y de versificación, teniendo en cuenta la pobreza de la poesía chilena anterior; pero muestra claramente que la estancia de Rubén Darío en Chile y la obra de los otros poetas americanos precursores del modernismo no llegó a influir más que en aspectos superficiales sobre el temperamento poético superior que Chile tuvo en aquel momento.¹⁶

The introduction of the anthology by Molina Núñez and Araya, on the other hand, considers the poet as a leader who "inició un movimiento nuevo y desconocido en nuestra literatura, y cuya obra personal y originalísima, fué una especie de grito de rebelión contra las antiguas y manoseadas escuelas clásico-románticas...." Some see a strong influence of Darío; others do not. Some place him as a *decadente*; others classify him as more a follower of Hugo than of the Symbolists.

16. Federico de Onís, ed., Antología de la poesía española, pp. 117-118.

Even if the ultimate aesthetic judgment of González should agree with Enrique Díez Canedo's opinion that the poet's work was nothing more than "elocuencia rimada," the fact remains that González displayed clearly his desire for new form (at least by the use of rare words, the employment of the *tripentálica*, and some unusual orchestral effects) and was applauded for his efforts. Although his work is not popular with modern readers, his importance was great in his time as a source of inspiration to younger poets who completed the renovation that Darío had inaugurated.

The history of the second period crystallized partially around a number of literary reviews, most of them of brief duration. Of the two founded in 1894 that included modernista collaborators, for example, El año literario published only three numbers and La América moderna failed after four. Lilas y campánulas, published by Francisco Contreras, was the most colorful of the group and equally ephemeral (November and December, 1897, and January, 1808). Its successor, La revista de Santiago, also had a most brief history (August and September, 1899). La revista nueva (1900-1902) included the collaboration of Julio Vicuña Cifuentes, Antonio Bórquez Solar, Gustavo Valledor, et al., but was more important for the "divulgación de la literatura extranjera," particularly of authors such as Rodó, Unamuno, Silva, Wilde, Ibsen, Santos Chocano, and others.¹⁷ The two of longest duration and of greatest importance, Revista cómica, which inaugurates the period, and Pluma y lápiz, near its conclusion, are taken up in separate chapters of this book.

In the small literary groups formed around these periodicals, decadente poetry was written and discussed, but the small place it occupied within the modernista movement was out of proportion to the battles that were fought over its existence. Its development, moreover, occurred only in the second period. The controversy of the first period was mainly theoretical; in Darío's work

^{17.} See Roberto Vilches, "Las revistas literarias . . ." and Raúl Silva Castro, "Francisco Contreras, crítico literario," Nosotros, LXXIX (July-Aug., 1933), 273-283.

published in Chile only limited traces of *decadentismo* can be found in his prose and practically none in his poetry.

One of the earliest exponents of *decadentismo* was Antonio Bórquez Solar. Certainly the opposition he aroused in the years 1897 to 1900 was due more to the new literature he sought to champion than to the personal animus that he saw everywhere with his somewhat paranoiac vision. In any case, Bórquez began his career with complete awareness of what he was undertaking:

Mi producción lírica ya tiene, desde entonces cada vez más, su sabor característico. Busco de preferencia los ritmos más armoniosos y las palabras más bellas o raras y relucientes como medallas nuevas. Literatura extranjera de Gómez Carrillo me había dado noticias de los rumbos novísimos de los poetas de París de Francia. Así quedó decidida mi orientación: sería un modernista y haría en Chile lo que Darío y Lugones en la Argentina, y en el Perú Chocano, para no nombrar sino a los vecinos. A poco rato oí por primera vez la palabra de mofa y el ladrido feroz: ¡Decadente! ¡Cuántos años tendría que seguir oyéndola y siempre con creciente intensidad, con odio creciente!¹⁸

One of the first satirical poems of the second period appeared in La ley, an imitation of a poem by Bórquez published there previously. Shortly after, an article by J. E. Moreno, "Los decadentes americanos," was answered by an unsigned article by Bórquez which was, in his opinion, the first modernista manifesto in Chile. The statement may be regarded as a kind of manifesto only in its ardent defense of the modernistas, but it is as vague as it is emotional in its tone, and contains no indications of plan, methods, or leadership. What it defends primarily is the principle of change.

In his memoirs Bórquez made clear his feeling that he was alone in beginning this period of *modernismo* and, in fact, that he had a monopoly on its early achievements:

^{18.} Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías . . . ," Atenea, II (Dec., 1925), 567.

^{19.} The article by Bórquez was reprinted in the second part of his series, "Bizarrías de antaño," which also contains the information concerning the items published in *La ley*. Bórquez gave no dates, although he noted that Moreno's answer to the "manifesto" appeared in the number of April 21, 1895.

Por todo esto puedo agregar con justísima razón que el caso mío ha sido único en esta tierra: ninguno antes que yo, prosista o poeta, fué tan acerbamente combatido. Y ello era sólo en los comienzos. ¡Qué mucho, pues, que ante la saña que promovía el modernismo que yo iniciaba, no hubiese ningún otro que resueltamente me acompañase! Hay que dejar constancia de esto y con toda la documentación de la época, de diarios y revistas, tanto más cuanto pueda andar por ahí un audaz que intente pavonearse con mis plumas. Por fortuna no me he muerto todavía y mientras viva he de dejar bien deslindada y defendida de malsines la parcela lírica que me tocó cultivar.²º

The monopoly, if there was one, was brief, and the credit for initiating this period should be shared at least with Francisco Contreras.

This early battle of Bórquez' career was waged by remote control, for he was teaching in Los Ángeles. In May, 1897, however, he moved to Santiago and took a more active part in literary activities. To his surprise he discovered that many of the writers of La ley were opposed to poetic innovation, and that many poets outside of the offices of the newspaper criticized Darío and all that he represented. His first skirmish in the capital was with Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza, who, after requesting Darío to write the prologue to Gotas de absintio, had suffered an early disillusionment with the movement. Again, the argument seemed to hang on the insulting implication of the word "decadente," and again Bórquez attempted to explain the real meaning of the term and the purpose of the school.²¹

On another occasion Bórquez rose to the defense of Angel C. Espejo's *Cuentos de alcoba*, which had been attacked in *La libertad electoral*:

He aquí el secreto: época de decadencia porque los espíritus no quieren someterse a la tutela; porque no se encuadran las producciones artísticas en los viejos moldes agujereados por el uso de cien generaciones; porque se proclama la independencia en el arte; porque se obedece a nuevas tendencias y se siguen

^{20.} Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías...," Atenea, II (Dec., 1925), 576.
21. See Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías...," Atenea, III (April, 1926), 187-192, and Rodríguez Mendoza's answer in the same volume (Nov., 1926), 360-362.

nuevos rumbos en concordancia con las aspiraciones y exigencias del progreso que se desentiende de los fósiles y sigue su gran marcha de triunfo; porque el artista pone más de relieve su personalidad, mira con sus propios ojos y es más sincero en la expresión de sus ideas, de sus emociones, sin tomar muy a lo serio una preceptiva casi de todo punto ilógica.²²

The concluding paragraphs of his defense indicate well the degree of emotional intensity that the controversies generated in Bórquez and the extent to which he felt himself the leader of a crusade:

En cuanto a vosotros que calificáis de decadente a todo artista, porque no sabéis el significado de un vocablo o no adivináis la intención en una línea, ni comprendéis un símbolo; en verdad os digo que para vosotros no se ha hecho el reino de los cielos, porque vosotros sois capaces de llamar decadentes a Cervantes y a Hugo.

En conclusión, no se puede llamar a ésta, época de decadencia para el Arte, ya que la ontología clásica ha cedido su lugar al hombre que no se preocupa de realizar la belleza eterna e inmutable de Platón; ya que la obra artística actual manifiesta el carácter y la impresionabilidad de su autor. El Arte convencional, que es la negación del Arte, ha muerto. Vive y triunfa el Arte personal. Y ya llegará el Mesías más grande y poderoso que los Homeros y los Dantes, espíritu profundamente sintético, todo luz y todo verdad....²³

In April, 1899, Bórquez took the initiative in writing an open letter to no one less than Eduardo de la Barra, stating the need for innovation in versification and praising González as the leading poet in Chile. The answer of Don Eduardo—always a formidable polemicist—was not long in coming. Bórquez replied impulsively with a strong attack, which, fortunately, was withdrawn by the editor of *La ley* just before being printed. There were apparently other conflicts similar to this one, some that ended in violent quarrels, and one, because of a parody by Ventura Fraga, that almost ended in a duel.²⁴

^{22.} Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías . . . ," Atenea, III (May, 1926), 287-288.

^{23.} Ibid., p. 289.

^{24.} Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías . . . ," Atenea, III (Sept., 1926), 148, and IV (May, 1927), 252.

The battle over *decadentismo* continued longer than it should have. As late as 1902, on the publication of *Brumas* by Miguel Luis Rocuant, Bórquez was still fighting the literary conservatives. The first portion of the review is important, not only for what it tells of a perennial issue in the movement, but also for what it reveals (an unmistakable echo of Darío's preface to *Prosas profanas*) of the public's general indifference to innovation in poetry:

Mañana, cuando ya el tiempo sea llegado, en un ciclo humano y artístico, el buen gusto dirá de muchos de nosotros así:—Floreció en los años de...bajo el dominio de los bárbaros. Y, ciertamente, continuará, historiógrafo veraz o crítico justiciero, estigmatizando la época en la cual por desgracia nos ha tocado vivir:—Falta absoluta de elevación mental, espíritu hostil y refractario a las bellas cosas de la poesía y del arte, un insolente desdén por cuantos se dieron a las especulaciones del ingenio, y procuraron por esta manera ennoblecerse por sobre su raza y salvarse del diluvio materializante, constituyen la característica distintiva y peculiarísima de este período.

Y esto estará probado.

Hoy, en este día, es por esto un verdadero atentado contra el gusto reinante de la época abyecta y grosera, artísticamente considerada, el hablar siquiera de la luz del sol que dora los paisajes y pone en los corazones la dulcísima orquesta del amor. Es por esto por lo que yo te digo, artista, quien quiera que tú seas, que más te hubiera valido nacer bestia montaraz que tener en ti mismo tu parte de Dios.

Oh, poeta! hermano mío, tú bien sabes que podemos aquí decir con mayor razón que Leconte de Lisle:—La poesía es un lujo intelectual inalcanzable para el público, porque en el

mundo del arte este pueblo está ciego y sordo.

De aquí que ya no sea extraño que se haya hecho una como conjuración del silencio contra este bello libro de poesías de Miguel Luis Rocuant, *Brumas*; que, cuando más, haya dado tema para las cuatro líneas del anuncio en la gacetilla de tal o cual diario. Y yo estoy bien seguro que si ha habido algunos que lo hayan leído, en más de algún labio, para el cual no fué la miel bíblica, ha sonado la asendereada palabreja: *decadente*. Por esto sólo hay que medir de su cultura literaria. En pleno reinado de la barbarie los que se levantan dos pulgadas de la mediocridad

general son motejados de decadentes. Y, por otra parte, es algo verdaderamente intolerable esto de que unos pocos se empeñen en cultivar rosas cuando todos viven de berzas.²⁵

A point that Bórquez made over and over in his memoirs was that he was alone in his championship of *modernismo*, and that he was influenced by no one (except by Darío in some of his earlier poems). He did make some concession to Miguel Luis Rocuant ("el primero y único reverenciador de Verlaine y del *modernismo* que encontré en Santiago"), but went on to say that Rocuant was not yet publishing when they first met in 1897.²⁶ With an emphasis so great that it is suspect, Bórquez gave the impression that he was not only the leader of *modernismo* in Chile but also its single exponent, at least in the years 1894 to 1900.

The desire to be unique forced Bórquez to denigrate the work and personality of Francisco Contreras:

También llegaba a la casa del Chico [i.e., Marcial Cabrera Guerra] el poeta Francisco Contreras, que ya había publicado un año antes su librito «Esmaltines», que había pasado casi completamente inadvertido. Recuerdo muy bien que los que escribían entonces no lo consideraban en serio, a él, personalmente, y si por un acaso hablaban de sus poesías lo hacían con tal desdén que daba pena y con una punta de malevolencia que me indignaba hasta el rojo blanco. Indudablemente, él fué un cruzado decidido de la renovación artística en este país y merece ser citado, no por haber sido un espíritu fervorosamente combatido, como yo lo fuí, sino por haberse alistado uno de los primeros junto a mi oriflama. Cuando comenzó a publicarse «Pluma y Lápiz», él fué uno de sus colaboradores en verso y

26. Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías . . . ," Atenea, III (July, 1926), 487.

^{25.} Antonio Bórquez Solar, "Bajo los bárbaros—Brumas," La ley, Dec. 25, 1902. Typical of the attitude that Bórquez was combating was the review of E. G. Hurtado y Arias in El heraldo (Valparaíso), Nov. 27, 1902: "Yo quisiera que el señor Rocuant hiciera un día este sacrificio: desempedrar su cerebro del fárrago poético modernista, o mejor, hueco y sensual que hoy lo invade; olvidar sus lecturas de Víctor Hugo (o de Préndez) y hasta de Bórquez Solar; contemplar la naturaleza con fervoroso ánimo de oír su voz" Another unfavorable review appeared in La lira chilena (signed "Petronio"), No. 46, Nov. 16, 1902.

prosa. Pero sus «Sonetines», así como su estatura también diminutiva, dieron motivo para que algunos chistosos le llamaran *Contreritas*. Hay todavía quien le recuerde con el mismo apodo, cariñosamente. Y para esto fué menester que Rubén Darío lo consagrara en París, en donde hace ya veinte años que reside....²⁷

Contreras' recollections contradict Bórquez' testimony. Far from being "inadvertido," Esmaltines caused the same kind of furor about decadentismo that Bórquez knew so well. If Contreras was not "ferverosamente combatido," he was certainly opposed, and his position in the history of Pluma y lápiz as its only serious literary critic is more important than Bórquez would concede. Furthermore (and this is probably what bothered Bórquez most seriously), although there is no doubt that Bórquez began writing poetry long before Contreras, there is also no doubt that Contreras' book was the first after González' Ritmos and that it appeared well before Bórquez' Campo de flores. The preface of Contreras' second book, Raúl, moreover, received more publicity than most of Bórquez' work, and put the younger writer in a position of leadership that challenged the other's claim to supremacy.

The question of leadership ought not to rest entirely on the matter of *decadentismo*, which is only one aspect of the second period. Perhaps *decadentismo* is limited in time to the years 1895-1900 and in production to the first books of Bórquez and Contreras and to the scattered and uncollected poems of minor writers such as Prieto Lastarria. Some traces of it may be found, to be sure, in poetry after 1900, but quantitatively its vogue in Chile was ended by that date. The relatively short duration and particularly the small number of poets attracted to it form a contrast

27. Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías . . . ," Atenea, IV (May, 1927), 244. Bórquez was wrong about the date of Esmaltines, which is usually given in reference works in 1898 but is really 1897. See chap. iv.

^{28.} Armando Donoso, ed., Nuestros poetas, p. xx, and Pequeña antología de poetas chilenos contemporáneos, p. 14; Max Henríquez Ureña, Breve historia del Modernismo, p. 351; Francisco Contreras, "Evolución histórica de las letras chilenas," Cuba contemporánea, III (Nov., 1913), 216.

with parallel phases of modernismo in Mexico, Argentina, and other countries.

Almost at the same time that *decadentismo* made its appearance in book form with *Esmaltines*, a poetic current diametrically opposed to it began with Diego Dublé Urrutia's *Veinte años*. Perhaps because Dublé, like González and Bórquez, was "discovered" by Cabrera Guerra, or perhaps because Dublé's first verses were printed in *La ley* and he was a friend of *modernista* writers, he has sometimes been classified erroneously as a writer of the movement. But although Dublé was an innovator, his innovation consisted in focusing attention on the Chilean landscape and its inhabitants, not in following the lead of Darío or of French writers. Francisco Contreras noted and admired the early development of a *criollista* trend contemporaneous with, and yet outside of, the *modernista* movement:

Le mouvement tendant à rejeter les influences étrangères pour s'adonner à interpréter les suggestions de la race et de la terre hispano-américaines se précisa au Chili peut-être avant que dans les autres pays du continent. Au moment où le modernisme triomphait, il y avait déjà des auteurs que s'efforçaient pour traduire l'âme et la nature nationales avec un art sincère et nuancé.²⁹

Dublé's book met with instant and unusual success. Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza recalled that Dublé's considerable talent was admitted by all from the first moment. Bórquez Solar said the same, and added that he envied the author's immediate and wide popularity, which was unmarred by adverse criticism. Bórquez' envy doubtless did not diminish when he was advised to write like Dublé, i.e., without noticeable French influence. The same popularity—and for the same reasons—greeted Samuel Lillo's *Poesías* (1900) and *Canciones de Arauco* (1908), "un éxito de librería hasta entonces no superado por otro de poesías." 30

^{29.} Francisco Contreras, L'esprit de l'Amérique espagnole, p. 121.

^{30.} Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza, *Como si fuera ayer*, p. 362; Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías...," *Atenea*, III (July, 1926), 481, 485; Austro, "La renovación literaria de 1900," *Atenea*, XVI (Aug., 1939), 302.

In general, criollismo not only began outside modernismo but stayed outside. Although it had its beginnings in poetry, it found its full expression in prose. Curiously enough, the reading of foreign novelists such as Zola, Gorky, and Dostoevski increased the search for a native Chilean expression, particularly among short story writers. The work of Baldomero Lillo, Guillermo Labarca, Fernando Santiván, Rafael Maluenda, Augusto D'Halmar, and Federico Gana was the foundation of the mighty edifice of criollismo which was to dominate the Chilean literary horizon for many years until the writers of the 1950's began to shout for its demolition. Clearly "la moda de la chilenidad," to use Armando Donoso's phrase, prevailed everywhere.

Criollismo touched on modernismo, however, in affecting two significant poets, Magallanes Moure and Pezoa Véliz. The former showed an unmistakable sentiment for realistic aspects of Chilean country life in Facetas (1902) and Matices (1904); "El riego," "El regreso," and "Los bueyes," are particularly memorable. "La jornada," "El patio dormido," "Al sol," "La carreta," and "Los gatos viejos" are only a few of the excellent criollista poems in his La jornada (1910).

The criollista elements in the poetry of Pezoa Véliz are so well known that they need no commentary here. It should be sufficient to note that his most famous poems are successful because they rest solidly on Chilean subject matter. The problem here is the more complex one of classifying him within the modernista movement. Critics are quick to point out that Pezoa is not a decadente poet, and that the most showy trappings of decadentismo—swans, jewels, princesses, and sensual refinements in general—are absent from his poetry. At the same time, it should be noted that in his early poetry Pezoa "cayó como todos en pecado de imitación," and that if one looks closely, the influence of other modernistas (Pezoa apparently had no direct contact with French poetry) can be found. He quickly turned away from this to native themes, to be sure, but the affiliation had been

made, even though a permanent commitment to modernismo had not been.

The aspects of *modernismo* in Pezoa's work have yet to be studied thoroughly, but some observations have been made. Armando Donoso's prologue to *Poesías, cuentos y artículos* (p. 37), for example, suggests that the background of Pezoa's poetry "está inficionado por todas las influencias del momento, desde Gutiérrez Nájera hasta Díaz Mirón y Lugones." The same writer developed this idea previously in *Nuestros poetas* (p. 186):

Fácilmente se advierten en la lírica de Pezoa Véliz dos corrientes, que sin ser opuestas, se distinguen y jamás confunden sus aguas. En la primera apunta el cincelador, el poeta orfebre que ha leído mucho a Rubén Darío y a Pedro Antonio González, cuyo ideal parece cifrarse en la busca de versos armoniosos y de consonantes raros. Su afán se traduce en un esfuerzo vigoroso por hacer «de la musique avant toute chose», aun cuando esta música no provenga directamente de un estudio propio, sino que más bien de reflejo.

The examples selected by the critic are quite musical, particularly the second, which could be a stanza of Darío's.

Francisco Contreras, who had been one of the exponents of decadentismo in Chile, supported the concept of the two different currents in Pezoa's work in a review of Alma chilena and also observed that they were frequently mingled. Something of the same concept can be seen in the conclusion of Stelingis' Carlos Pezoa Véliz, poeta modernista innovador, even though the author noted the absence of decadente elements in Pezoa's work.

Could not one say that *modernista* characteristics are present in Pezoa but subservient to and buried by the more important attention to both *criollista* themes and themes of social consciousness? If so, then three currents really are combined in the poet. It is significant that Pezoa's best poems contain a strong sympathy for the poor, the humble, and the oppressed. Of the twelve poems selected by Antonio de Undurraga as the mainstay of Pezoa's reputation, nine are labeled "poesías sociales y de protesta" in Guz-

31. Mercure de France, CVIII (April 1, 1914), 646-647.

mán's edition of the poet's work. Certainly the continued growth in Pezoa's popularity evinced in the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of his death is based in great part on the evaluation of his work as artistic social protest and as one of the first expressions of sympathy with the common man to find a permanent place in Chilean literature.

A very interesting article by Pezoa has the double significance of showing his rejection of the snobbish and pseudo-erudite adherence to Symbolism then in vogue and of illustrating the difference between simple *criollista* poetry and a crusading zeal that bordered on revolutionary sentiments.³² The occasion was a review of Manuel Magallanes Moure's *Facetas*, which Pezoa likened to a stream of pure water:

Pero por esto mismo (y éste es un *pero* de volumen), por eso que tienen siempre de estanque, cascada, vertiente; agua, agua, agua... por eso resultan anémicos, casi monótonos, iguales e inofensivos, es decir, impregnados de un airecillo de paz que no cuadra a la época, ni al deber.

Al triunfo, en dos palabras. Porque en estos tiempos de desesperanzas y luchas extrahumanas será poeta el que haga sus versos con jirones de alma, con trozos de bandera, con carnes

hambreadas.

And a little later on, he made his meaning clearer as he protested vigorously:

Si el poeta habla del agua con la voz misma del agua, hable también de los sedientos... Si quiere contar sus cuitas al paisaje, hable desde la tosca puerta del rancho carcomido, donde hay tapias, rosales, organismos y esperanza ruinosas... Cante al viento que arrastra el polen (¿quién no recuerda «Fecundidad»?), principio de vida, y el ¡ay! de los desheredados, principio de muerte.

Desmenuce las rosas de los jardines rústicos; pero junto a las rosas ajadas cuente algo de lo que piensa la hija del inquilino vejada por el patroncito....³³

32. Pezoa also made a slighting reference to Francisco Contreras' "El puñal antiguo," giving the poet's first name as Julián.

33. From La lira chilena (Oct. 9, 1904), quoted in Antonio de Undurraga, Pezoa Véliz, pp. 188-189.

The current of humanitarian poetry was not so much the reflection of conscientious reading of novels by Zola, Gorky, and other foreign writers (although these must have had some effect) as it was the result of social conditions in Chile in the years immediately preceding and following the turn of the century. The labor movement had a slow but discernible start in the 1880's with the organization of sociedades de artesanos, which embodied the nucleus of a feeling of solidarity and potential political strength in the working class and contributed to the founding of the Partido Democrático in 1887. In the year when Azul was published, the new party called a mass meeting to demonstrate for lower public transportation fares. The demonstrators got out of control, burned streetcars, and were quelled only by the appearance of police and military forces.³⁴

The first strikes had taken place as early as the years of Balmaceda's administration, during a time when the country was enjoying an unprecedented prosperity that, with rare exceptions, left industrial workers and miners unaffected. The postrevolutionary years did not improve their lot; economic fluctuations and political uncertainties aggravated the social problem. Violence on a large scale was not to erupt until the strikes of Valparaíso (1903), Santiago (1905), Antofogasta (1906), and Iquique (1907) shook the nation with reports of bloodshed and property losses, but evidence of deep-rooted conflict was certainly apparent in 1898, when Baldomero Lillo arrived in the capital to begin his literary career defending the exploited. The poetry of social revolt in the succeeding five years forms an interesting parallel to the development of prose in the same period.

Indications of depression, unemployment, and financial panic were widespread in 1897, due in part to the crisis in nitrate production, poor harvests, and heavy defense expenditures. If the government had not intervened, the Banco de Chile would have failed. The crisis was so great that the Errázuriz administration was obliged to request the temporary suspension of the gold standard:

^{34.} Francisco Frías Valenzuela, Historia de Chile, IV, p. 245.

El hecho de más trascendentales consecuencias que se produjo en ese momento dramático de la vida de Chile, en circunstancias que las relaciones con la República Argentina pasaban por un período de aguda tirantez, fué el de dictarse la ley que autorizó la emisión de 50 millones de pesos de papel moneda, que no sólo importó la quiebra del padrón de oro, sino la imposición de un régimen monetario que pesaría sobre las clases medias e inferiores, con leoninas ventajas para las clases poseedoras.... Si la historia monetaria puede tener sus tragedias,... puede decirse que la suspensión del padrón de oro en Chile en 1898, es una de ellas.³⁵

Inflation made the plight of the workers more desperate than ever, and they began to be susceptible to revolutionary propaganda, symbolized by the appearance of "hojas periódicas" such as "El rebelde," "La tromba," and "El ácrata."

With regard to its effect on *modernista* writers, the most significant of the four major strikes listed above was the one at Valparaíso, which made an impact on *Pluma y lápiz*. The attempt by the workers to obtain a salary increase from the shipping companies ended with the burning of buildings and merchandise on the dock, an attack on the *El mercurio* building and others, and looting of stores. Thirty were dead and two hundred wounded. Much more formidable in scale was the riot in Santiago during a time when the army was out on maneuvers. For two days the mob terrorized the capital, wrecking streetcars and monuments, looting, and even attacking La Moneda and the government treasury. One writer (R. Subercaseaux, *Memorias de ochenta años*, p. 202) estimated that there were three hundred dead. The most tragic of all was the strike at Iquique, in which over a thousand may have been killed.³⁷

Humanitarian poetry may have had some small encouragement from a little-known poem by Darío, "Al obrero," which bears the note "Composición leída en la celebración del ani-

^{35.} Ricardo Donoso, Desarrollo político y social de Chile . . . , pp. 106-107. 36. For a general picture of the economic crisis and some of its consequences, see Jaime Eyzaguirre, Chile durante el gobierno de Errázuriz Echaurren, pp. 83-86, 164-166, 300-303. 37. Francisco Frías Valenzuela, Historia de Chile, IV, pp. 313-316.

versario de La Liga Obrera de Valparaíso." The fact that Darío remembered the workers kindly and refused to associate them at a later date with the pillaging in the civil war makes one wonder if Darío's poetry might not also have been affected by contemporary labor difficulties if he had remained in Chile. The poem itself, however, is a simple praise of work and contains no reference at all to unfavorable working conditions, much less a call to revolution.

That Darío sympathized with the social problem, nevertheless, is indicated in a letter to Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza concerning the latter's *Gotas de absintio*: "La parte de socialismo artístico no me desagrada porque es la reacción contra la opresión de la vida moderna. Pero no olvida usted, y hace bien, que el arte es esencialmente aristocrático." ³⁹

In the vague and confused philosophy of Pedro Antonio González, with his constant pleas for liberty and progress and his oratorical denunciation of misery and injustice, there were some elements that may also have encouraged the growth of humanitarian poetry. Not only was he the authorized spokesman for the Partido Radical, but also the idol of young writers of the period. Without actually preaching revolution, without dwelling particularly on the plight of the working class, but merely expressing a broad sympathy that condemned all social injustice, González created an atmosphere favorable to the incubation of Bórquez Solar's violent denunciations. Domingo Melfi has summed up this aspect of the poet's work:

González, hombre culto para su época, transformó en verbo las inquietudes doctrinarias de su tiempo y arrastró, como en una alucinación, a las masas jóvenes que le leían con avidez o que recitaban en reuniones políticas y entre los obreros que comenzaban a agitarse, los poemas consagrados al Progreso, a Matta, a Pasteur, a Martí, o a las figuras y sucesos históricos de relieve. Versos para muchedumbres, magníficos de sonoridades im-

^{38.} Obras desconocidas . . . , ed. Raúl Silva Castro, p. 266, and Raúl Silva Castro, Rubén Darío a los veinte años, pp. 270-271.
30. Rodríguez Mendoza, Como si fuera aver, p. 306.

previstas, ruidosos y armónicos. Era natural que el poeta congregara la admiración de la juventud.⁴⁰

Bórquez Solar noted that the atmosphere of the period was one of rebellion, and he threw himself as eagerly into the social crusade as he had into the aesthetic. The two, indeed, were simultaneous during the year 1895. Some parts of *Campo lírico*, notably "Los pobres" and some of the poems in the section titled "Selva de horror," deal with the social problem, and Bórquez stated that the majority of the book's poems were written in that year.⁴¹

Bórquez received encouragement for his humanitarianism from the influential news editor of La ley, whom all the modernistas admired, Marcial Cabrera Guerra. In the prologue to Campo lírico (p. xvii), the latter wrote: "... Soy de los que aspiran a que el Arte se ponga al servicio de la época, como primer factor de su progreso." Not only did he praise Bórquez for his sympathy with the poor and the humble, but he also urged him to seek a greater, more sincere, and more useful expression of it.

If what we might call Bórquez' "social conversion" began in 1895, apparently he did not become fully aware of it until 1898:

De modo, pues, que desde este año 1898 datan mis trabajos en pro de los menesterosos y contra las injusticias sociales. Visité fábricas, talleres, suburbios, cárceles, hospitales, todos los lugares de horror, dolor y muerte, y en vez de sentirme anonadado ante el convencimiento de mi importancia y de la inutilidad de mis clamores, pedí justicia en prosa y verso, en la prensa y en los comicios públicos. Soñaba con hacerme oír, quise—joh locura!—ser como un profeta y alcanzar así la inmortalidad de la fama. El amor a las clases obreras y proletarias tuvo entonces en *La ley* una voz constante, la voz de una campana dolorida, ora tocando piedad, ora tocando rebato. Y esa voz era la mía, que se quejaba por las propias y ajenas angustias, y clamaba en el desierto. 42

^{40.} Domingo Melfi, El viaje literario, pp. 40-41.

^{41.} Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías . . . ," Atenea, II (Dec., 1925), 575. 42. Ibid., III (July, 1926), 489-490.

The same sentiment was expressed in Bórquez' prologue to the work that was the poetic culmination of his protest, *La floresta de los leones* (1907). Here what was only a breeze in Bórquez' first book became a raging storm. With surprising rapidity, Bórquez was able to change his mood from that of the elegant *decadente* poet writing for the select few to that of the reformer preaching to the multitudes.

In addition to Bórquez and Pezoa, the only other poet who might be considered a *modernista* and is at the same time included in the section "Poetas acráticos" of *Selva lírica* (pp. 468-472) is Carlos Mondaca. Unfortunately, the editors did not give the titles of the poems on which they based their classification; certainly they are not the poems by Mondaca which appear in that anthology nor in the anthologies listed in the bibliography at the end of this work. The word "acrático" is not employed as Darío used it in the preface to *Prosas profanas*, that is, applied to a poetry that expresses individuality and does not recognize hierarchies; it is used to signify revolutionary poetry. The editors may have had in mind "El ácrata," one of the anarchistic leaflets which were published to support striking workers.

All the other "ácratas" listed in Selva lírica, with the exception of the three names above, are outside the modernista movement. The name of Víctor Domingo Silva is the best known of these; the others do not seem to have won a permanent place in Chilean literature. Significant for the present study is the indication that humanitarian poetry, like criollista poetry, was a broad current that swept in to affect some of the writers of the modernista movement; it was, nonetheless, an entirely independent current. Armando Donoso observed that out of a sense of social service writers began to frequent the workers' centers, and that the Ateneo heard poets and novelists promulgating a new humanitarian creed. When the review Panthesis was founded, many tried out their skills at the "palabra roja" until the strike of 1905 stopped the game.⁴⁴

^{43.} Quoted in Tobías Vera, Parnaso chileno, p. 169.

^{44.} Armando Donoso, ed., Nuestros poetas, p. xxi. It has not been possible to

What makes the relationship between humanitarian and modernista poetry more complicated is the influence of the former on poets both inside and outside the movement. Thus the same ideas shaped the social intentions of Dublé Urrutia's "Las minas," of Bórquez' La floresta de los leones, of Víctor Domingo Silva's Hacia allá, and of Pezoa Véliz' "El organillo." It is difficult, moreover, to find a similar development of social protest within the movement in any other country. The closest would be the cases of Ricardo Jaimes Freyre and Leopoldo Lugones, both confirmed socialists in Buenos Aires when Darío was leading the modernista group there. With José Ingenieros, Lugones edited La montaña, the subtitle of which, "periódico socialista revolucionario," was reflected in an aggressive call to battle in the first number (April 1, 1897).45 The principal difference between the two modernista groups was that social ideas made a more durable impression on Chilean poets than on their Argentine counter-

Apparently the "palabra roja" did not end completely in 1905, for several years later the critic Omer Emeth wrote in a review of *Horas perdidas* (1909):

Siento que A. Samadhy preste a sofismas tan peligrosos el poderoso encanto de su poesía, y que no eche al mar, una vez por todas, ese humanitarismo ciego que hoy día es una plaga o, si esta calificación es muy suave, una peste mundial. Seamos humanos, enhorabuena; mas no llevemos la humanidad hasta idealizar al anarquista y a la...ramera. No perdamos, en fin, la noción del bien y del mal, y no confundamos al humanitarismo con la humanidad.⁴⁶

Within or outside *modernismo*, social consciousness continued, although it never surpassed the height of achievement it reached in the poems of Pezoa Véliz.

consult the periodical referred to. Its pages might establish interesting links between *modernismo* and revolutionary poetry.

^{45.} Eduardo Joubin, "Estudio preliminar" in Ricardo Jaimes Freyre, *Poesías completas*, p. 15.

^{46.} Omer Emeth, La vida literaria en Chile; primera serie . . . , pp. 8-9.

* * *

Raúl Silva Castro raised a most interesting question about the modernista movement in a recent article when he suggested that this was only a convenient name and that the designated group in Chile lacked cohesion; e.g., no two writers could be more different than Contreras and Pezoa.⁴⁷ Certainly there is a sharp contrast between the early decadente verse of Contreras and the later criollista poetry of Pezoa, the two manners commonly accepted as most characteristic of their respective authors. And yet, are there not some decadente and Symbolist elements in Pezoa, and some criollista elements in Contreras that provide an aesthetic common denominator, although not an equivalent? Did not Contreras call attention to the different tendencies within Pezoa's verse and praise him more for being criollista than for being cosmopolitan?

One must, then, adopt broad criteria for the delineation of *modernismo* as a school, but also bear in mind that no unanimous agreement can be obtained for these criteria. The lack of definition applies not only to *modernismo* in Chile, but to other countries as well.⁴⁸ The anthologies of Armando Donoso and of Molina Núñez mix together *modernista* and non-*modernista* writers in the same section, and the former inexplicably omits completely the work of Miguel Luis Rocuant. The histories of literature are not much more helpful. The problem of classification is complicated by the twin currents of *criollismo* and humanitarian poetry to which we have referred. Because of them, some Chilean critics speak not of *modernismo*, but of a generation of 1900, in order

^{47.} Raúl Silva Castro, "Las generaciones de la literatura chilena," Inter-American Review of Bibliography, VIII (April-June, 1958), 132.

^{48.} See, for example, the classifications in Federico de Onís' authoritative anthology. Onís, incidentally, is of no help in clarifying the focus of Chilean *modernismo*: he correctly lists González as a precursor, but lists only Pezoa as a full-fledged *modernista*, and Magallanes Moure, Contardo, Prado, Jara, Mondaca, Préndez Saldías, Guzmán, Guzmán Cruchaga, Vicuña Cifuentes, Silva, Hübner, Cruchaga Santa María, and Gabriela Mistral among the various subheadings of *postmodernismo*.

to include as many writers as possible. Others, faced by the need to keep a historical classification simple, have included writers such as Dublé Urrutia, Samuel Lillo, and Víctor Domingo Silva as contributors to modernismo.

The problem cannot be resolved completely here. In the present study the main criterion has been the influence on a given poet of either French poets after Romanticism or of other modernista writers. Magallanes Moure is an interesting and typical case in point. His poetry is simple, personal, and free of the affectation and showy external devices that were attractive to Bórquez and Contreras in their early poetry. He also focuses attention on pastoral and domestic themes sufficiently to make his work a part of criollista poetry. However, even though French influence is not dominant in his work, it is very much present. In the conclusion of his recent book on Magallanes Moure, Stelingis relies on the opinions of Contreras, Bernardo Cruz, Molina Núñez, and Scarpa for his judgment:

En cuanto a las influencias que sufrió nuestro poeta, podemos decir que empieza imitando las poesías románticas de Bécquer y de su padre muerto; crece bajo la protección modernista de Rubén Darío y, en sus últimos libros, logra crear un mundo poético propio, suyo, pero que siempre recordará el gusto rubendariano por "la forma depurada", el encanto de Maeterlinck por "las lejanías azulosas", y el tono "dorado de Alberto Samain: una sutil gracia transparente, hecha de nada, de aire" que "constituye el luminoso fondo" de su poesía. 49

According to the criterion given above, Bórquez, Contreras, Rocuant, and Magallanes Moure—all under the leadership of Cabrera Guerra and of *Pluma y lápiz*—constitute the hard core of the movement. They are surrounded by satellites of lesser literary merit such as Horacio Olivos y Carrasco, Gustavo Valledor, and Abelardo Varela. Pezoa Véliz, because of his strong criollista tendencies, merits a special place to himself within the movement. Others may be classified as the second rank of modernistas, i.e., with a French influence that is diluted by other tend-

^{49.} Paulius Stelingis, La poesía de Manuel Magallanes Moure, p. 124.

encies: Carlos Mondaca, Ernesto Guzmán, Max Jara, Jorge González Bastías.

The historical conclusion of *modernismo* in Chile began with the demise of *Pluma y lápiz* in 1904. There were, to be sure, other literary publications, such as *Zig-Zag*, but the focal point for the *modernista* group disappeared. Cabrera Guerra's activities between the dates when *Pluma y lápiz* ceased publication and when he was committed to an asylum are not known. Contreras left for France. González died in 1903, Pezoa in 1908. In 1905 Rocuant stopped publishing poetry for many years. The other poets gradually sought new directions in their poetry, and left *modernismo* behind them.

The aesthetic conclusion of the movement came in 1908 with the publication of Pedro Prado's first book, *Flores de cardo*. Superficial critics like Polanco Casanova dismissed it as the work of a crazy revolutionary who wrote free verse because he did not know metrics. Others, more perspicacious, like Omer Emeth, were not misled by its widespread adverse reception by the newspapers, and qualified the critical reaction as unjust. According to Emeth, *Flores de cardo* lacked logic, but had some pages of real beauty; its defects were attributable to the author's youth.⁵⁰

The novelty of *Flores de cardo* was symbolized by its title, a deliberate avoidance of elegance and refinement in favor of the most severe simplicity. Coming when it did, the book marked both a renovation and the real end of Darío's influence in Chile. Onís' anthology describes it well as "poesía intelectual, que huye del sentimiento y rechaza los adornos para buscar la clara frialdad, patética por lo mismo, de las ideas y la escueta justeza de expresión" (p. 649). Raúl Silva Castro also summed up the revolutionary intent and effect of Prado's literary debut:

Quiso libertarse de la poética habitual, de ésa que se aprende en los textos, y trazó poemas sin rima y, a veces, algunos sin ritmo cantable. Llamó la atención, y la crítica formalista se sintío escandalizada. Con mayor perspectiva temporal, podemos

50. Rodolfo Polanco Casanova, Ojeada crítica . . . , p. 49, and Omer Emeth, La vida literaria en Chile; primera serie . . . , pp. 11-16.

apreciar mejor el fenómeno producido. Cuando Prado publicó *Flores de cardo* contaba sólo veintidós años; la edad de la rebeldía se manifestaba en él por al abandono voluntario de las formas sólitas de la poesía.⁵¹

The fact that the end of *modernismo* had been reached did not mean that no more *modernista* poetry would be published. In fact, the first books of Mondaca, González Bastías, and Jara, and the third books of Guzmán and Magallanes Moure—collecting, of course, many poems that had been written and published a number of years before—appeared after *Flores de cardo*. Omer Emeth's review of Guzmán's *Vida interna* (1909), condemning it as "simbolismo decadente" and complaining about the attempted revival of a tendency that had been dead for years in Chile as well as in Europe, is a commentary on the prolonged conclusion of the movement.⁵²

The line of demarcation was blurred also by critical estimates that now seem completely erroneous. A minor but interesting example of this is an article by Ricardo Valdés (1917). It criticized the *modernistas* for being obscure and incoherent, but the examples given to support the claim—one by Pablo de Rokha and the other by an unidentified writer—are clearly subsequent to *modernismo*. In fact, the entire article indicates a lack of awareness of what the movement really signified.

If one trait were to be singled out to characterize the second period and set it apart from *modernismo* in other countries, it would be the unusual combination of diverse tendencies within the movement. A case could be made, of course, for viewing *modernismo* purely in terms of *decadentismo*, but in that case the number of authors and their space in time would be reduced nearly to insignificance. It would be preferable to call attention to the parallel currents of *decadentismo*, *criollismo*, and humanitarian poetry, which together constitute the mainstream of the production in the period. Such diverse tendencies not only did

^{51.} Retratos literarios, p. 129.

^{52.} Omer Emeth, La vida literaria en Chile; primera serie . . . , pp. 19-25.

not conflict in Chile, but in some cases were expressed harmoniously by one author.

Argentina, too, had an early phase of strongly humanitarian poetry, particularly in the socialistic bias of Leopoldo Lugones. A friend of his, for example, remembered that when he visited him in 1898, Lugones had recovered from a stage of anarchism. Domesticity apparently had calmed him; the socialist periodical which Lugones had directed was no longer being published, nor did he attend socialist meetings. But he still criticized decadentes and certain tendencies that they represented within modernismo.⁵³ This sort of conflict was not felt strongly in Chile, where decadentismo and the other tendencies developed side by side and were not mutually exclusive.

The idea that *modernismo* has two general developments—one toward cosmopolitanism and the other away from it—is a generally accepted one:

En la segunda etapa se realiza un proceso inverso, dentro del cual, a la vez que el lirismo personal alcanza manifestaciones intensas ante el eterno misterio de la vida y de la muerte, el ansia de lograr una expresión artística cuyo sentido fuera genuinamente americano es lo que prevalece. Captar la vida y el ambiente de los pueblos de América, traducir sus inquietudes, sus ideales y sus esperanzas, a eso tendió el modernismo en su etapa final, sin abdicar por ello de su rasgo característico principal: trabajar el lenguaje con arte.⁵⁴

The war of 1898 was certainly an impetus in the reorientation of poetry around native themes, but the dividing line cannot be drawn sharply; it affected different poets and different countries at varying times. In any case, a great deal of Chile's *modernista* poetry written well before 1905 represented the tendencies which Federico de Onís grouped as part of the concluding period of the movement under the heading of *postmodernismo*, 1905-1914. In this sense the Chilean group was an atypical one within the continental movement.

^{53.} Arturo Ambrogi, Marginales de la vida, pp. 46-48.

^{54.} Henríquez Ureña, Breve historia del modernismo, pp. 31-32.

For those who might take the division more literally than Onís may have intended it, for those who may consider Darío's Cantos de vida y esperanza and 1905 as the beginning of the descent from the ivory tower, it may be observed that "the trip home" had already been accomplished in Chile. This early attention to the regional scene and to social factors constitutes not only the most distinctive characteristic of the second period, but also its principal achievement. Even more important is the fact that social topics so opposed in theme to previous modernista poetry could be developed within the historical framework of the movement. What could have been the basis for another aesthetic revolt was accepted by writers and public alike as the natural growth of the reform which Darío had inaugurated in Chile.

55. Onís has stressed the organic growth of modernismo through a combination of diversities.



Was that its second period included a transition that should normally have been accomplished with the first. Nothing illustrates this point more strikingly than the *Revista cómica*, which was careful to be moderate in its affiliation with the movement and which gave the bulk of its space to the kind of poetry that young writers in other countries were actively rejecting. At the same time, it provided leadership for those who desired a renovation in Chilean literature, and guided them with good taste and wisdom. Even more important, it opened its columns to points of view and to styles of writing of which the editors personally disapproved. By doing so, its most important contribution was not so much the stories and poems which appeared in its pages as the creation of a climate of tolerance towards experimentation, an element indispensable for the success of the movement.

The founding literary director, Ricardo Fernández Montalva, was a young poet referred to by a prominent critical anthology—perhaps with permissible exaggeration—as "nuestro mejor poeta romántico," and by a biographical dictionary as "el Musset de Chile," classifications which accurately place his work as antecedent in character to the *modernista* movement. Born in 1866, he began an editorial career early as director of *El ateneo de Santiago* (1884-1887), and was later on the staffs of *La tribuna* and *La época*. He published a small volume of poetry, *Întimas*, in

1888. Shortly before the Revolution, he was secretary of the Chilean legation in Paris. Certainly at the office of La época and in Paris he was in close contact with the same discussion of literature that served as the point of departure for numerous modernista writers, yet the influence of reform is not apparent in his writing. Unlike the two editors who followed him in the Revista cómica, Fernández Montalva published no translations, and only three translated poems appeared in the periodical during his entire editorship. Except for his bohemian habits and his founding of the review, he had no direct connection with the modernista movement. There can be no doubt, in any case, that the review he founded "difundió el gusto por el periódico literario y preparó el camino a las publicaciones de después."1

One of the frequent contributors to the Revista, Julio Vicuña Cifuentes, took over the literary directorship with Number 30 (March, 1896). Again we have the case of the editor whose affiliation with the movement was not through his own poetry; Federico de Onís has described Vicuña Cifuentes' poetry rather as the "fruto tardío de su vida, más moderno que los del modernismo, escuela a la que debió pertenecer por su edad y de la que le separaron su gusto por lo popular y su temperamento sano, preciso v vital." But the future of the distinguished professor and academician was related to modernismo in other ways, and particularly through the cosmopolitan spirit expressed in his translations. In the Revista cómica he published numerous and skilfully translated selections from the classics, from Italian (Giusti) and from French (Lamartine, Arnault, and Bourget). After the period of association with the periodical, he also published a Spanish version of a Brazilian work, Antonio Goncalves Dias, Poesías americanas, 1903. Furthermore, the increase of foreign writers in the Revista during his editorship was notable: authors of considerable diversity such as Sully Prudhomme, Poe, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Gautier, Baudelaire, Goncourt, Banville, Bourget, Whitman, Wilde, Verlaine, Heine, Richepin,

^{1.} Guillermo Muñoz Medina, "La generación de 1900 y Augusto G. Thomson," Atenea, XXIX (Feb., 1935), 224.

Mendès and Fort were translated by Eduardo de la Barra, Abelardo Varela, Adolfo Sáenz Echeverría, and a number of people who wished to remain anonymous. Excluding the three poems that appeared in numbers 8 and 12, the expansion of space given to translations (until they constituted an almost regular feature, beginning with Number 62) is attributable to the second editor. A brief examination of the index to the periodical (see the Appendix) indicates that Vicuña Cifuentes did not neglect original compositions; ninety-one appeared over twenty pseudonyms.

With Number 93, the first week of September, 1897 (exactly a year and a half after the first change of editors), Abelardo Varela took over the literary directorship from Vicuña Cifuentes. Like his predecessor in the post, Varela had been one of the most frequent contributors of poetry to the periodical before becoming editor. Unlike Vicuña Cifuentes, however, he sought actively to represent the newest currents in his writing, even though his talent was greater in translation than in original composition. Armando Donoso's note in the anthology *Nuestros poetas* (p. 41) sums up well the significance of his work:

Abelardo Varela fué un precursor: después de Rubén Darío, de Manuel Rodríguez Mendoza y de Pedro Balmaceda Toro, nadie como él leyó con tanto interés a los poetas franceses, pro-

curando difundirlos con sorprendente inteligencia.

Amigo de Rubén Darío, de Pedro Balmaceda, fué uno de los mejores conocedores de la poesía lírica francesa moderna, que alcanzó a traducir para las páginas de la «Revista cómica». Debe tener un sitio entre los precursores de la renovación lírica chilena, aunque su obra es insignificante, pero tiene la clarovidencia de lo nuevo: ha escuchado el canto del viajero azul en los jardines de Verlaine. He ahí poesías como *Hibernus*, que no es más que una reminiscencia y una imitación de cierto divulgado poemita de «Fiestas galantes», cuando aún no se leía a Verlaine en América.

While he was editor, Varela continued to produce the translations that were then so distinctive a characteristic of the periodical. To the authors given above, Varela added the names of Longfellow and Leconte de Lisle; other translators contributed

for the first time items by Tolstoy and Heredia. Bourget, Catulle Mendès, Verlaine, Banville, and particularly Sully Prudhomme received additional representation. Perhaps on the basis of translation and of the personalities and backgrounds of the editors, one can say that Vicuña Cifuentes was more *modernista* than Fernández Montalva and less *modernista* than Varela.

The first number of the Revista cómica appeared on August 4, 1895, and the periodical was published regularly, with only occasional lapses, every Sunday through Año III, Number 114, fourth week of March, 1898, or a total of 912 pages.² Its subtitle, "Periódico ilustrado, satírico-literario," appeared at the head. The issues, always of eight pages, were numbered separately and distinguished not by the exact date, but by the designation "primera semana," "segunda semana," etc., of the month concerned. Interruptions of schedule were infrequent, but there were some for 1897, one of which was followed by an apology (in Number 81, p. 642) for having failed to publish on the two previous Sundays, and another that lasted a month (second week of November, 1897) because of a reorganization of the system of distribution.

The closest thing to a prospectus for the review was the lead article—untitled and unsigned—of the first number. The purpose of the periodical was introduced through the imagined reaction to a theatrical performance:

Riamos...pero, en medio de la orgía de nuestras mundanas pasiones satisfechas, lancemos la nota risueña, poniendo un poco de ajenjo en el champagne.

A esto viene *La revista cómica*—a reír y llorar con las cosas diarias, sin odios para nadie, sin adulos para nadie, como un estudiante que, en su viaje de vacaciones, va de ciudad en ciudad, por teatros y paseos, haciendo el amor a las muchachas buenas

2. The description by Roberto Vilches (p. 155) seems to be at least partly in error: "Con el número 119 del año 1897 fué suspendida su publicación por motivo de algunas dificultades de orden interno y por otras de orden económico; pero reapareció la primera semana de agosto de 1899, para morir casi de inmediato a fines del mismo mes." The collection of the review at the Biblioteca Nacional was complete for 1897 (through Number 103), went as far as Number 114 (March, 1898), and contained no numbers for 1899.

mozas; arrancando la peluca a los sátiros decrépitos; buscando recuerdos de impresiones muertas en las ruinas de los antiguos poderíos, y poniendo motes de ironía en los mármoles y bronces modernos.

Sin odios y sin adulos...y también sin pretensiones.

The last line here is the most significant, for it turned out to be both a sincere and an accurate definition of aims.

The bulk of the material in the Revista cómica was non-modernista in character. For example, the drawings, which practically represented the satirical element of the periodical's subtitle, filled almost one-half of each issue. (Not only is the drawing of high quality, but the humor frequently continues to be alive after the passage of many years.) With few exceptions, the prose that fills the remaining pages contains nothing that would differentiate it from the style which dominated the literary scene before the modernista renovation. As for the verse, a great portion of it is precisely the kind that modernismo was reacting against, and a substantial portion might be characterized as neutral. A surprisingly small percentage could be classified as bad.

The editors apparently wished to avoid the uncomplimentary label of *decadente*. In the third number Fernández Montalva rejected a would-be contributor because of his association with the new literary group. In another letter to a correspondent, Vicuña Cifuentes expressed a similar point of view more forcefully:

Ahora me habla de escuelas literarias, y de prevenciones que, según Ud., abrigo yo contra cierta clase de literatura. Sobre importárseme poquísimo de esas nuevas escuelas, tengo muchas dudas respecto de su legítima existencia. Creo que la literatura moderna, sin razón alguna que la abone, tiende a convertir las variedades en especies; al revés de la ciencia, que se esfuerza por hacer de las especies variedades.³

In spite of the protestations, however, or perhaps because of them, one reader referred pointedly to the editors as *decadentes*

^{3.} Number 33, p. 263.

(Number 56, p. 447). The periodical's real position on the subject was expressed in the statement of an early issue (Number 12, p. 95): works by new names would be introduced provided that they were of high quality. This policy would admit the decadentes and all schools, subject to judgment of the individual works in question, and would explain editorial decisions that seem to conflict. In Number 42 (p. 335), for example, the editor was favorable to new tendencies in his announcement of the review's prize competition for 1897, including a category for "un estudio crítico sobre las modernas escuelas literarias posteriores a la aparición del romanticismo en Francia."

Naturally, the majority of contributors were Chilean writers, but of a variety of literary tendencies that did credit to the breadth of the editors' judgments. Many contributions were made by the three editors themselves, both in poetry and prose, under a variety of pseudonyms, so that any future biography of these figures would be incomplete without a survey of the contents of the *Revista*. With the exception of an established literary figure, Eduardo de la Barra, most of the contributors were youthful. *Modernista* writers are well represented: González, Bórquez Solar, Olivos y Carrasco, Cabrera Guerra, Valledor, and Magallanes Moure.

Of equal importance are the contributors who were beginning careers that were not to follow the *modernista* current: Samuel and Baldomero Lillo, Dublé Urrutia, and Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza. Some writers who also collaborated but are considered today to be of secondary importance were Bolet Peraza, Ricardo Prieto M., Pedro Emilio Gil, A. Mauret Caamaño, Ángel C. Espejo, and B. Vicuña Subercaseaux. A small number of foreign contributors, both resident in Chile and from abroad, included Miguel Sawa (Spain), Emilio Berisso (Argentina), Robert Brenes Mesén (Costa Rica), J. Antonio Solórzano (El Salvador), José M. Barreto (Peru), José Santos Chocano (Peru), Leopoldo Lugones

^{4.} The judges were to be Eduardo de la Barra and Francisco Concha Castillo. Unfortunately, the competition, and the *almanaque* that it was to supply, were abandoned for lack of interest.

(Argentina), Isaías Gamboa (Colombia), and Emperor Pedro II of Brazil.

The editor's satisfaction after the first year of operation was justifiable. The review had provided a forum for young writers and had maintained high literary standards without yielding to cliques or to snobbery. It had relied completely, furthermore, on original contributions. In spite of difficulties of the literary ambiente, its success was unusual:

Con el presente número, La revista cómica entra en el segundo año de su existencia.

Ruda ha sido la labor durante el transcurso del primer año, teniendo que luchar para abrirnos paso a través de la indiferencia con que el público acoge generalmente las publicaciones de la índole de la nuestra, pero hemos vencido. Si bien los resultados materiales no nos han satisfecho por completo, al menos podemos declarar que la vida de *La revista cómica* queda asegurada.

Deseosos siempre de estimular el desarrollo de la literatura patria, hemos ofrecido sus columnas a los escritores nacionales, quienes, en buen número, han concurrido a llenarlas, a satisfacción de los directores del periódico y del público, que les ha tributado sus aplausos.

Si algunas veces, violentando quizás nuestro propio criterio, hemos dado albergue a algunas producciones que no habrían resistido al examen de una crítica severa, sírvanos de disculpa el deseo de alentar a los noveles escritores, que pueden brillar mañana en el mundo de las letras.

Ajenos a toda vulgaridad, nos hemos abstenido de reproducir artículos de revistas extranjeras, para dar a nuestros favorecedores sólo producciones originales.

En la convicción de haber cumplido como buenos la tarea en que nos encontramos empeñados, réstanos ofrecer nuestros agradecimientos a los distinguidos colaboradores de *La revista cómica*, cuyas continúan siendo sus columnas, y a los amigos que nos han alentado en la prosecución de nuestros fines.

Los Directores.5

There were indications that the success was not only literary but also financial—at least compared with what was usually ex-

5. "Dos palabras," Number 51, p. 402.

pected from a review of this kind. Although there are no figures at hand regarding circulation, the fact that more than four hundred solutions were sent in for a puzzle may be significant. Within less than a year (see Number 42), also, the directors improved the quality of the paper. Finally, Virgilio Figueroa's biographical dictionary observes that the *Revista* may well have been a profitable enterprise for Fernández Montalva.

In addition to the incorporation of translations, two major changes in policy gradually became apparent, particularly in the final third of the periodical's history. The amount of prose decreased to make way for poetry and especially for translations. Also, the policy against using reprint material must have been modified, at least with respect to translations in prose. Such writers as Paul Bourget and Theodore de Banville probably did not send their articles directly to the *Revista cómica*; yet the editors did not identify the translators of many of these essays and stories.

Except for these modifications, the review continued in the same form with which it began. Even though the editors did not specifically declare goals of broadening literary taste, of publishing the work of new and talented writers, and in general of establishing a higher standard of literary quality, their work was able to speak for itself. The editors seemed to understand thoroughly both what they wanted to do and how much could be achieved, given the *Revista*'s public and the support of the writers. The fact that they were not excessively ambitious was a sign of maturity that did credit to a young staff. Most of all, the *Revista* did well and consistently what it set out to do. Its achievements were all the more remarkable considering the general neglect of literature that was its background.

The sole but eloquent witness of the poor literary conditions of the period was the column "Baturrillo" by Efraín Vásquez Guarda, who signed himself Antón Perulero. Probably a certain objectivity was supplied by Vásquez' position on the fringe, rather than in the center, of the literary world; literary manuals, at

least, do not list his name. His main activities subsequent to his work on the staff of the *Revista* seem to have been primarily political. He had come to Santiago in 1889 from Valdivia, where he had taught history in the Liceo, and had collaborated in *El timón*, of which he was co-founder. In 1890 he was a contributor to *La nación*. In 1891 he was made Secretary of the Supreme Court, a post that he lost as a result of the Revolution. He continued actively in journalism, working for the restoration of the Partido Liberal Democrático. Not only did he serve twice as deputy, but also, for several months in 1904, as Minister of Justice. His best known non-political works are translations of Heine.

In a volume of criticism published in 1892 under the title of *Tajos y reveses*, he criticized Darío's "Canto épico a las glorias de Chile." In 1902 he contributed the preface to *Facetas* by Magallanes Moure, and continued the defense of poetry that was characteristic of his articles in the *Revista cómica*:

La poesía se enseñorea aún dentro del arte, y los que la cultivan alcanzan en todas partes los honores que la gloria reserva a los escogidos.

Solamente en Chile hay gentes que dicen perrerías de los que vacían sus ideas en renglones cortos. El poeta aquí o es un ocioso o un ignorante.⁷

But there was no reference in the preface, even indirectly, to modernismo.

Antón Perulero launched his column with a frank, if pessimistic, appraisal of the literary ambiente: "De las buenas letras nadie ya se ocupa en Chile, como no sean las de cambio. El positivismo lo va abarcando todo, la literatura inclusive." The fact that no one was writing anything of value at the time (1895) was heightened by the fact that even the journalistic world was living on borrowed resources; the Chilean press relied not only for its news but also for its opinions on foreign

^{6.} It has not been possible to examine this work. It is listed in Obras desconocidas de Rubén Darío, ed. Silva Castro, p. cxviii.

^{7.} Manuel Magallanes Moure, Facetas, p. iii.

newspapers, and especially on *La nación* of Buenos Aires. Nor was the work of translation original either, since French stories were taken from Argentine periodicals.⁸ The implication certainly was that Chilean literature was in a state of bankruptcy.

Part of the blame, according to Vásquez Guarda, belonged to the older generation of consecrated writers such as Matta, Lillo, Blest Gana, and De la Barra, who no longer produced works in quantity. But the younger writers were not any better in spite of their greater responsibility, and the columnist expressed particular disappointment with Concha Castillo, Vicuña Cifuentes, the Del Campos, and Montaner. At times, he said, Ricardo Fernández Montalva wrote something of value, or Gustavo Valledor produced a sonnet of *decadente* flavor, or González abandoned abstruse philosophical disquisitions to express a true vein of poetic fantasy. But all of this happened only from time to time, and the dominant impression was still one of barrenness.9

Vásquez defined the underlying cause of literary stagnation not as a lack of talent or education, but as the predominance of positivist thought, which stifled poetry. (In this, certainly, he was an ally of the young modernista writers of all countries, and yet he opposed modernismo, or as he would prefer to define it, decadentismo.) Both young and old writers were infected with the virus of "la poesía positivista," which is to say no poetry at all. Both fled from the metaphysical poetry of the Siglo de Oro to the books (not always understood) of Spencer, Bain, Maine, and Tylor, which could never be a fruitful poetic influence. The critic also saw the desire for money and success as a cause, the "afán lucrativo." To cap things off, writers were looked down upon patronizingly by men of science, and good writing and good taste were scorned.

The critic lashed out unhesitatingly at the poor writing that

^{8.} Number 1, pp. 3, 6. 9. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

^{10.} Sir Henry James Sumner Maine (1822-1888), English comparative jurist and historian. Tylor (given as Tyllor) must be the distinguished English anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917).

^{11. &}quot;Baturrillo," Number 3, p. 19.

he felt was characteristic of his time. His opinion of *Numilda*, a work in the style of Núñez de Arce, was fiercely satirical. The pages of *El ferrocarril*, with their unworthy topics, poor style, and weak grammar, were another target. Apparently he developed a special allergy to the rhymed fables of Sandalio Letelier, as he did to the work of Erices Moreno and of Villalón y Ogasi. (See Numbers 4 through 8, and Number 10.) Certainly the samples quoted justified Vásquez' indignation. His censure may have been overstated, but it was not misplaced.

It is interesting to note also his opposition to *modernismo*, for it placed him in the critical dilemma of advocating reform and at the same time disagreeing with the only group which was practicing it at that time:

¿La poesía?

Pues hoy la poesía en Chile no da signos de vida, como las daba hace muy pocos años.

Y aquel que se dedica hoy a ella tiene que entrar por la senda modernista o decadentista o gongorista, que tanto da,

para que nadie le entienda.

Ahora, muchos poetas—esto de poetas es un nuevo convencionalismo entre nosotros—no saben sino hablarnos de los policromos, de las tardes grises, de los sonetos negros, de las estrofas azules; y, en vez de hacer medianos sonetos o décimas pasables, nos brindan *medallones* y otras estulteces, que no son sino imitación servil de ingenios extraviados de otros países americanos. No tenemos siquiera la originalidad de muchos desatinos.¹²

He thus tacitly admits that Chilean poetry has entered a blind alley and that anyone seeking a new path must at least take *modernismo* into account. But all that *modernismo* represents, as he sees it here, is personally objectionable to him. His only solution would be to write traditionally and well, a formula that could hardly appeal to the impatience of young poets.

The opposition to *modernismo* also came through unmistakably in Vásquez' mixed criticism of Pedro Antonio González. Here he recognized a poetic talent that was superior, but with

^{12. &}quot;Baturrillo," Number 1, p. 6.

certain attitudes and devices not to the critic's taste. González' "Natalicio," published in La ley, was the special object of his criticism. This poem used words such as "sedeñas," "azules," "undívagas," and "edénicas," all of which added up to "mucho modernismo," i.e., striving for novelty. Vásquez attributed the poem's obscurity to nothing more than the choice of words according to the rhyme scheme. In short, the critic considered González successful only to the extent that he was not led astray by decadentismo, scientific poetry, or attempts to versify the theorems of Letelier's Filosofía de la educación, attempts that entangled him in his ideas. If accurate, the definition would put González in both the modernista and positivist camps, damn him for both, and praise him for what was in between. The feelings against decadentismo were particularly strong:

Yo le he aplaudido muchas veces lo bueno que ha solido publicar antes de ahora; pero, desde que ha entrado en campos por hoy vedados a la poesía y desde que ha querido exotizarse, bajo la influencia no bien sentida de Richepin, de Verlaine y demás maestros franceses, he tenido que dudar de la bondad de sus lucubraciones poéticas.¹³

On another occasion, the mixture of praise and blame was weighted more heavily on the side of praise, but still with unmistakable animus toward the new literary current. Vásquez liked *Ritmos* very much; it had some defects but in general revealed a first-rate talent influenced by Hugo and Núñez de Arce. There was some *decadentismo* in the book, but it was well concealed: "El señor González se ha colocado en cierto punto medio, bastante discreto, entre las escuelas que pugnan hoy por el triunfo de sus ideales."¹⁴

"Baturrillo" was not the only source of unfavorable criticism of *modernismo*. Two other writers treated the subject with acid humor. Eduardo de la Barra, writing here under the name of Gil del Arco, had had previous success with his parodies of Darío's

^{13. &}quot;Baturrillo," Number 9, p. 67. 14. "Baturrillo," Number 21, p. 163.

poetry, Las rosas andinas. The following, printed with two other unrelated brief poems as "Epigramas nuevos" in Number 35 of the Revista, were additional poetic criticism of the school:

¡Cuántas palabras tintinsonantes,
policromáticas y rimbombantes!
¡Cuántas y cuántas!
¡Cuánto concepto coloretista!
Novel artista,
nada te entiendo; pero me encantas.
¿Eres poeta?...—¡Soy simbolista!

The first section of a prose sketch, "El Deuteronomio, periódico delicuescente," by Oscar Parodi (Du Roy) was merciless:

—Ése, ése es el título que por su rotundidad, concisión, cosmopolitismo, base histórica y significado hermenéutico conviene a nuestro periódico, decía hace poco un amigo a otro amigo.

—Sí, y tratará de todas ciencias y artes, tanto conocidas como por conocer; en éstas seguiremos las escuelas más culminantes y para aquéllas adoptaremos la clasificación de Compte.

—Pero, siempre es mejor ceñirse a algunas: la astrología, la indumentaria, la filosofía, la numismática, la geología, la química, la geografía, la quiromancia, la sociología, la gnomónica, la patología, la literatura, la apicultura, la vitivinicultura, y otras cuantas que nos son familiares.

—Convenido. Se conoce que eres práctico. Vamos ahora a la distribución del material de lectura. Un periódico es un ejército en que la buena colocación de los batallones—de las colaboraciones—influye mucho en el éxito de la batalla.

—A mí me parece que de sus cuatro páginas la primera debe dedicarse a la sección de fondo, la segunda a la literatura amena, una a la crónica lugareña y otra al relleno con folletines.

—¿Y qué te parecen para folletines «Los Raros» de Rubén Darío, o «Las Campiñas Alucinadas» de Verhaeren, o «El Hidrargirio» de Mauricio de Henry?

—Magníficos, aunque yo daría la preferencia a los maestros: haría traducciones de Verlaine, intercalaría por ahí algún leitmotiv de Wagner, y entre los italianos, me ensañaría con Petruccelli della Gattina.

-Pero, hombre, fíjate en el buen efecto que haría esta frase de Verhaeren, si no me engaño...«Y en la sartén, las papas vírgenes preludiaron los compases azules de la canción del hambre». 15

The concluding portion of the sketch is a description of the lavish budget which the periodical will have, including parchment calling cards, a large staff, and generous expenditures for drinks and tips, all readily agreed to by both parties in the mistaken belief that the other would pay the bill. Mutual disillusionment marks the end of the *modernista* periodical.

The criticism of *modernismo* was most pointed when it became personal. In reviewing two books by young authors, Vásquez blamed their defects on the leadership and influence of Darío. Concerning Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza's *Gotas de absintio*, he wrote:

El señor Rodríguez Mendoza hace sus primeras armas con un librito que es una esperanza. A. de Gery revela talento y cierto espíritu penetrante para sintetizar una idea o sondear un sentimiento. Lástima que el decadentismo—un decadentismo convencional y por lo mismo exótico—ande por los trigos de A. de Gery. Si el señor Rodríguez Mendoza logra sustraerse a él y no vuelve a acordarse de Rubén Darío como maestro, estoy seguro de que su labor literaria no pasará desadvertida, ya que posee condiciones de literato. El estudio, sobre todo, señor Rodríguez Mendoza, y nada de erudiciones a la violeta y francesismos. 16

This was severe enough, but left Darío's achievements unchallenged; only the leader's influence was censured, not his poetic capacities. On the second occasion, a note on Bórquez Solar's "Primaveral," Vásquez expressed the feeling that Darío's work had been overrated:

La escuela rubendariaca es la causa de los desaguisados del señor Bórquez Solar, quien, sin duda, cree que Rubén Darío es un maestro infalible. Pero no hay tal maestro, ni tal infalibilidad, porque el poeta nicaragüense es imitador de la escuela

^{15.} Number 72, p. 575.16. "Baturrillo," Number 16, p. 123.

francesa del decadentismo y, por otra parte, suele desbarrar muchas veces, no obstante su gran talento lírico.¹⁷

Nor was Vásquez alone in his unfavorable estimate of Darío and of *modernismo*. The position of *Revista cómica* as a transitional periodical, in fact, was revealed by the editor's reservations about the movement, and was expressed clearly in an unsigned review, presumably written by Vicuña Cifuentes, of *Prosas profanas*. The fact that this was the first of the few book reviews in all the numbers of the periodical suggests that Darío's growing reputation may have been sufficient to break a precedent.

Concluimos de leer el libro y cerramos los ojos....

Nos pareció ver un Arlequín, que llevaba en cada triángulo de la casaca multicolor, un nombre: Verlaine, Mendes, Richepin, D'Annunzio...

Y «esta literatura es mía en mí,» dice Darío, como si Arlequín dijera: esta casaca que veis de muchas piezas, muchos colores y muchas marcas, es de una sola pieza, de un solo color, y no tiene más marca que la mía...

¿Mistificación? Nuestra, no. Del poeta, acaso...

Azul seguirá siendo su libro, del que van ya varias ediciones agotadas.¹⁸

An interpretation of an article by Darío was the cause of an attack on the author in April, 1896 (Number 37, pp. 290-291). The *Revista* made its position clear in an introductory note to a satirical poem:

Se nos ocurre que la siguiente hermosa composición, que hemos recibido por el Correo, obedece al propósito de contestar de un modo digno y agudo, a la vez que discreto y comedido, el desdeñoso artículo que Rubén Darío publicó en la prensa de Buenos Aires, sobre los mismos poetas chilenos a quienes ensalzó no hace mucho tiempo, cuando vivía entre nosotros.

Ya veremos lo que contesta el apóstol del decadentismo, que tan modestamente se ha jactado de habernos traído las gallinas...

17. "Baturrillo," Number 19, p. 147.

18. Number 82, p. 655.

The poem, "La crisantema," bears the subheading "A Rubén Darío" and the signature "Florencia." 19

I

Yo, el modesto *Alcanfor*, soy en mi tierra flor sencilla del campo, crezco a toda intemperie, al sol y al viento, y nadie me hace caso.

Pero acá, en otro mundo más brillante, crisantema me llamo, flor a la moda soy, flor celebrada, y reino en los palacios.

Y figuro en los albums y jarrones, y en senos no tocados; las damas me prefieren, los poetas mis triunfos van cantando.

Las rosas, las violetas, los jazmines, ya de los tiempos rancios, hoy son vulgaridades, cual los mirtos y los laureles clásicos.

Lo vulgar y común yo lo detesto, amo lo extraordinario: amo lo decadente en poesía, y en el arte, lo raro.

Yo lleno el mundo y el Japón me aclama, Pierre Loti me ha ensalzado; ¡soy la única flor, flor simbolista, y por mí misma valgo!

H

Oyólo una Violeta, medio oculta entre la verde grama, y díjole:—Alcanfor envanecido, que a ti solo te amas;

19. Armando Donoso (Obras de juventud de Rubén Darío, pp. 98-99) identifies "Florencia" as Eduardo de la Barra, who parodied Darío in Rosas andinas and in a satirical version of "Los bárbaros, Francia" published in La revista ilustrada.

¿Cuáles son tus perfumes y colores? ¿Qué virtudes te ensalzan? Hoy te aclama la moda; mas, su imperio relámpago es que pasa!

Hasta la tarde de esplendente púrpura palidece y se apaga. ¿Y fías en tu boga?—No desprecies ni la noche ni el alba.

Lo eternamente bello nadie borra; las rosas nunca pasan: si tú las desconoces, Crisantema, los siglos las acatan.

Homero es joven; el Petrarca enciende las amorosas almas; canta la alondra, y seguirá cantando a las rosas y al alba!—

Así dijo la tímida Violeta perdiéndose en la grama, y, sin querer, embalsamó el ambiente su esencia aristocrática.

Y así es la Poesía, ella perfuma al mismo que la ultraja. —Alcanfor literario, ¿quién te hizo Crisantema en el Plata?

The present writer believes that the article that motivated the poetic satire above was the third of a series by Darío published in La nación of Buenos Aires on February 7, February 12, and March 8, 1896, on the work of Menéndez y Pelayo, including a review of his Antología de poetas hispanoamericanos. Two sections in particular must have given offense. The first follows a discussion of Sarmiento, whom Darío defended from the severe treatment he received from the Spanish critic:

Hoy se ven los resultados de las extensas miras de Sarmiento, al sentir el influjo que el pensamiento cosmopolita ejerce sobre estas crecientes nacionalidades, y si existen quienes descuiden el cultivo de la lengua maternal, de nuestra hermosa lengua española, otros hay que se preocupan por ella deseando resucitar sus antiguos prestigios y aumentar razonablemente su fuerza y su gracia, en vocabulario, rítmica, plasticidad y matiz.20

The references to "pensamiento cosmopolita," synonymous at the time with modernismo, and to renovation, surely allude to Darío's campaign.

The conclusion of Darío's article, it should be observed, is unfavorable to Chile only when it quotes the ideas of Menéndez y Pelayo, with whom Darío expresses disagreement:

De poetas como el siempre joven y bizarro Eduardo de la Barra y Guillermo Matta, de Lillo, que no quiere ser poeta, con justicia, y del ya olvidado Blest Gana, no dice nada Menéndez y Pelayo, a causa del propósito manifestado de no ocuparse en las obras de los vivos; pero dice de ellos que «son prenda de un porvenir que puede ser tan honroso como lo es el presente bajo

otros respectos».

Hoy por hoy, la cuestión estética no ha echado raíces hondas en Chile. Lo que se escribe en esa república es árido y prolijo, y nótase la «falta de estilo y arte de exposición que en las mismas monografías históricas, que son el nervio de su literatura, desluce muchas veces los resultados de una labor sabia, paciente y honradísima». «Yo admiro y aplaudo el ardor patriótico con que los chilenos se consagran al esclarecimiento de sus anales patrios; pero observo cierta falta de armonía y de proporción en sus trabajos, por lo cual es difícil que fuera del país en que se escriben logren muchos lectores. Chile, colonia secundaria durante la dominación española, tiene historias más largas que la de Roma de Mommsen, más largas que la de Grecia por Curtius o por Grote. Por último, el predominio del positivismo dogmático, triunfante al parecer en la enseñanza oficial durante estos últimos años, contribuye a aumentar la sequedad habitual de la literatura chilena, sólida por lo común, pero rara vez amena.»

Algunas observaciones. Los Amunáteguis son hijos de los Bellos. Bello impera todavía en gran padre de la inteligencia chilena. Mas en medio de las montañas de piedra, de las piramidales historias de los Barros Arana y de las secas y filantrópicas predicaciones de los comtistas y lagarriguistas, suelen

20. Darío, Escritos inéditos, ed. E. K. Mapes, p. 91.

aparecer bellas flores de Arte. ¿Ha leído Menéndez y Pelayo un librito póstumo de un hijo del infortunado ex presidente Balmaceda? ¿Ha leído algo de A. de Gilbert? ¿Conoce las tentativas de los cultores que el arte de la palabra tiene en Chile? En la juventud chilena comienzan a aparecer nombres que ofrecen una buena cosecha para lo porvenir. No todo es arideces y cosas prácticas en ese vigoroso Chile. Suele a veces cantar, al claro de luna, sobre las balumbas positivistas, sobre los fárragos históricos, sobre las duras rocas del código, sobre la fría estatua calva del insigne Andrés Bello, un ruiseñor.²¹

In reality, the *Revista cómica* had nothing to reproach Darío for in this article, except a note of pride at having introduced reform to Chilean poetry. Perhaps back of the editors' statement there was some feeling of envy concerning the position of leadership that Darío had assumed, and perhaps envy was made more acute by resentment at Darío's neglect of Chilean writers after his departure.

In fact, the quotations above, taken out of context, do not give a fair idea of the extent of Darío's opinions stated in the article. His main purpose was not to defend Menéndez y Pelayo's unfavorable picture of Chilean literature, but to correct it. Politely, but concretely and firmly, he took issue with the Spanish critic. In some cases he approved of what had been said, but in the main he amended or contradicted the critic's judgment of an author or work. The total impression brought out the reviewer's honest and detached evaluation of the worth of Chilean literature. The article as a whole constitutes additional proof of the accuracy of Raúl Silva Castro's observation in the final chapter of *Rubén Darío a los veinte años* that in spite of a note of bitterness conveyed in a confidential manner to Rodríguez Mendoza, Darío basically had a high opinion of Chile and that he expressed this in all of his public utterances.

The satirical items against Darío in the *Revista* form an interesting contrast to considerable evidence of his influence on some of its poetry. One has only to note a reference to a poem by Darío

^{21.} lbid., p. 92.

in the verses of Grez (Number 100, p. 795), or the obvious imitation of Darío's "Era un aire suave" in Bórquez Solar's "La estudiantina Aurora," in Carlos Ledgard's "Nocturno," and Horacio F. Rodríguez' "El violín de Albertini." Manual Ugarte's "Serenata," warmly praised by the editors in a special note, reflects the influence not only of Darío, but also of Gutiérrez Nájera and Silva. There is even a brief poem by Darío, "En un álbum," in an early number (Number 5, p. 35), although it has been described correctly by Silva Castro as "cuatro versos perfectamente insignificantes." ²²

The indirect influence, or at least the example of Darío, is also seen in a number of poems that are particularly emphatic examples of *modernista* verse. Abelardo Varela's "Spleen," with its melancholy moon, monster, and desire for forgetfulness through absinthe, is in the best decadent tradition. The mysterious mood and unusual versification of his "Vesper," and "Amor," based on a quotation from Verlaine, are also attempts at poetic novelty. The evocation of an exotic African landscape, with references to the Nile, the Sphinx, and harem life, furnish the background for Leopoldo Lugones' "Cuadro." Here, perhaps, is the first colored cousin of Darío's captive princess:

¿Qué tiene esa negra? (La negra está sola, sentada en la orilla.) ¿Medita tal vez? Medita. Fué un día de claros azules, de rojos flameantes, y un mar como aquel.

The anonymous "Haydée" and "Flor-de-té" by J.G.O. represent the exoticism, luxury, and sensuality cultivated by the *decadentes*. One of Bórquez Solar's flamboyant contributions, "El himno de los Andes," imitates the orchestration of Darío's "Marcha triunfal" to such an extent that the author should have been ashamed to use the title of Darío's poem in one of the verses.

These examples do not indicate that the majority of poems in the *Revista* could be classified as *modernismo*; actually, the contrary is true. They do suggest, however, that the editors did not close the door to any aspiring writer on the sole basis of affilia-

^{22.} Obras desconocidas de Rubén Darío, ed. Silva Castro, p. cv.

tion with a literary fashion that was on occasion flatly criticized in the same review.

Some of the poetry typified in lack of imagination the stereotype that modernismo was reacting against. "La flor de la virtud" (by Federico González G.), for example, is the poorest specimen of poetry that one can find in the pages of the Revista cómica. A close second is "Cerro grande," by a popular writer of the older generation, Vicuña Solar. Although the work of Fernández Montalva is generally passable, an occasional subject (e.g., "A la inteligencia") is most unimaginative. Even Bórquez Solar could write an empty poem like "La lira con crespones," which might be charitably dismissed as album verse.

In contrast to the great mixture of verse, both in quality and

variety, the prose of the Revista is generally non-modernista. With very few exceptions, the only obviously modernista prose was written by Bórquez Solar. Here was novelty with a vengeance, however; pieces such as "Filigrana," "Cintia," "La canción de la campana," "Haz de lilas agrestes," and "Oriental" were designed to bewitch, dazzle, and bewilder. Not only were lavish sensory perceptions mixed in confusion, but coined words, recherché allusions, and unabashed exoticism were added in generous proportions. This section from "Cintia" is typical of the unrestrained Bórquez:

Es la mujer alba, la de ojos garzos y pestañas crespas.

Allí está melancólica, pensativa. Ella es Flora, la reina, la diosa triunfal. Por ella gorgoritean las diucas pardas y dan sus ritornellos los gilgueros de alas grises y de tibia pechuga áurea; las flores radiosas se ostentan con los colores múltiples del iris para que ella las mire hermosas. Su pensil es el gran pebetero de donde se exhalan los perfumes que embriagan como el absinto, dulcemente, como el licor de los ópalos líquidos, que hace la delicia en el aduar de los bohemios harapientos.

Las hebras de sus bucles negros, muy negros, son las cuerdas de un harpa eólica que vibran cuando la ráfaga de alas murmuradoras las roza tan suave que produce apenas un chasquido parecido al del beso que se deposita en los labios purpúreos; y sus mejillas, la nieve rosácea de las cordilleras al sol de ocaso; y

su garganta, el nido de las libélulas soñadas; y sus pechos, las pomas erectas y túrgidas, que se dilatan como la onda que se esponja, y...toda, toda ella es Eros, esencia purísima del buen dios del amor.²³

But such heavily laden prose was the exception in the Revista, and Bórquez was the only sinner.

It has already been noted in Chapter I that one of the salient characteristics of the second period was the early growth of a social consciousness that frequently expressed itself through protest. This consciousness was present in the *Revista cómica* only in a limited and indirect form. An occasional hint in a prose piece (e.g., "Mosaicos" in Number 34, p. 266, or Olivos y Carrasco's "Bibelot," Number 55, p. 438) suggested an unbridgeable gap between social classes. In only one case was the awareness of injustice carried to a threat of violence. A prose sketch in "Mosaicos" for Number 85 (p. 674) makes a melodramatic contrast between the poverty of an honest worker driven to beg because his children need food, and the luxury of the house from which he is thrown by uniformed lackeys. When the worker makes a threatening motion at the palace with the dagger he has drawn from his belt, his gesture is not only symbolic but prophetic.

Again, this was the exception. But there was a persistent undercurrent of awareness of social inequities in many of the stories even if it did not reach full development in protests. Many of the narrative situations derived their drama (frequently their melodrama) from extreme contrasts in social position: the poor poet in love with the heiress, the musician who did not earn enough to support his family although he performed in mansions, the lavishly dressed mistress who gave a large coin to her beggar mother and hoped that she would not be recognized, or the woman who begged for money outside the palatial home of her former lover. In these situations, to be sure, one cannot distinguish easily between conventional oversentimentality and recognition of social injustice. Certainly the general tone was designed more

^{23.} Number 15, p. 118.

to tug at heart strings than to launch a social crusade. But the frequency of contrast between rich and poor doubtless created a climate of awareness that was to find expression after a few years in sympathy with strikes and in approval of poems that made common cause with the underprivileged. To this extent, these stories in the *Revista* could be called a weak but perceptible foreshadowing of the future.

Generally lacking also was evidence of the trend towards what might be called nativistic or nationalistic poetry, which described the landscape and the activities of country people as the *criollista* novel was to do in later years. This can be found in *Pluma y lápiz* as a well-defined current. The only good example here, however, is Samuel Lillo's "Estío," an effective harvest scene.

Except for an occasional whim of the editors (e.g., a review of a book by the Colombian modernista Ismael Enrique Arciniegas in Number 82 or the unfulfilled promise in Number 106 of a series of silhouettes by Manuel Ugarte on young French poets), the cosmopolitanism of the Revista cómica was expressed most consistently in its translations. Making no distinction between poetry and prose, and including the imitations, one finds a total of sixty-four.24 The largest number, of course, were translated from French writers, but it is interesting to note that with the exception of Hugo-always dear to modernista poets-and of Lamartine, all the French were post-Romantic writers. Baudelaire, Banville, and Sully Prudhomme were the most popular. Other nationalities represented were German, Russian, Italian, English, and American, although with the exception of Giusti none of these had more than one translation for each writer. Worthy of mention here are several items by Philibert Germain printed in French without translation.

^{24.} These are arranged alphabetically, as follows, with the number of translations in parentheses if there is more than one: Arnault, Banville (10), Baudelaire (10), Bourget (4), Catulle Mendès (4), Durocher, Fort, Gautier, Giusti (2), Goethe, Goncourt, Heine, Heredia, Hugo, Lamartine (2), Leconte de Lisle (2), Leopardi, Longfellow, Poe, Richepin (3), Rollinat, Sully Prudhomme (7), Tolstoy, Verlaine (3), Villiers de l'Isle Adam (2), Whitman, Wilde.

The review was most indebted for its translations to Abelardo Varela, who was responsible for seventeen of the sixty-four. Vicuña Cifuentes was the translator of six, De la Barra of three, Navarrete and González G. of two each, and Sáenz Echeverría, Brenes Mesén, and García Rodríguez of one each. The remaining translators chose to remain anonymous.

A note on page 109 of the last number (Number 114) marked

the end of publication in the last week of March, 1898:

Hemos acordado suspender nuestra publicación por el término de tres meses, a fin de cumplir con nuestros deberes de ciudadano y de patriota.

Esperamos que nos habréis de perdonar esta interrupción.

Los Directores

This final note did no justice to the periodical's achievements. In spite of the opposition of its first two editors, most of the young writers who made up the movement at the time were contributors. Darío and his work were criticized and satirized, but his influence had a noticeable impact. Most important of all, in the latter part of the periodical's life a series of varied translations not only introduced the writers—particularly the French—who were the inspiration of modernista poets, but also created a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Modernista writing might continue to be resisted as affected or obscure poetry, but after the conclusion of the Revista cómica, it would have been foolish to attack the movement just because it was new or different.



One of the least known expressions of modernismo in Chile is perhaps the most rewarding compendium of its aspirations, limits, and idiosyncrasies. Pluma y lápiz, a periodical published from the end of 1900 to the middle of 1904, served as a meeting ground for young and untried writers, and at the same time attempted to hold the interest of the public at large. Some understanding of this dual effort, along with the measure of its relative success, may reveal salient characteristics of literature in Chile in the early years of the century which differentiate it from the development of modernismo in the sister republics.

The history of *Pluma y lápiz*, to the extent that it is the history of its founder and directing editor, Marcial Cabrera Guerra, is limited by our general lack of knowledge concerning his life. The principal source of information is Bórquez Solar's memoirs, "Bizarrías de antaño," published in *Atenea*. If the biography of Cabrera which Bórquez was said to have left in manuscript at his death ever comes to light, perhaps the complete story of the life of *Pluma y lápiz'* editor will become available.

Nothing seems to be known about Cabrera's early life except that, according to Virgilio Figueroa's *Diccionario histórico y biográfico de Chile*, "era hijo de Talca, donde hizo sus primeras armas en la prensa, y de allí se trasladó a Santiago y poco después, por el año 1895, tomó a su cargo la sección noticiosa del órgano radical." At the end of 1893 and in 1894, he was on the staff of

El heraldo of Valparaíso.¹ If Bórquez Solar was correct in recalling that Cabrera was twenty-three when they met in January, 1894, then he must have been born in 1870 or 1871.

Cabrera had come to Los Ángeles representing candidates of the Radical Party in the political campaign. His close friendship with Bórquez in these months signified a literary awakening for the latter, who was teased for his veneration of Spanish classics and academicians. As substitutes, Cabrera suggested Darío, Casal, Silva, Gutiérrez Nájera, and other *modernista* writers, quoting at length from the resources of an excellent memory. Through his friend, Bórquez was introduced to the poetry of Pedro Antonio González and to the refinements of *poesía decadente*.²

Bórquez' physical description of Cabrera is an interesting complement to the drawing that may be found in *Selva lírica*, compiled by Molina Núñez and Araya:

Era de pequeña estatura; pero de complexión recia y maciza. Firme y seguro paso en el andar. Cabeza grande, aunque no desproporcionada. Mirada inquisitiva y entre risueña y dominadora. La nariz acaballada, el bigotito rubio, los labios de pulpa gruesa y el mentón fuerte y como levantado, le daban una singular característica. Palabra fácil y abundosa. El ademán resuelto. Todo en él indicaba el hombre de valer, de talento vigoroso, sin miedo y sin tacha.³

After Cabrera's return to the capital, he continued his friend-ship with Bórquez through correspondence and gifts of foreign books and periodicals. When La ley was established in June, 1894, Cabrera became an active member of its staff, first as a reporter and later as head of the news section. In December, 1896, during a hurried trip to Santiago, Cabrera's ambitious young friend from the provinces paid a visit to the newspaper office, where he met a writer whose poetry and personality made a lasting impression on him, Pedro Antonio González.⁴

^{1.} Nicolás Peña M., "Crónica literaria; Pedro Antonio González," Revista chilena, VI (Nov., 1918), 271.

^{2.} Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías . . . ," Atenea, II (Nov., 1925), 468-471.

^{3.} *Ibid.*, p. 468.

^{4.} Ibid., II (Dec., 1925), 565, and III (March, 1926), 49.

Cabrera's friendship with González is so well known that it need not be documented here. It is enough to note that Cabrera was not only the closest friend that González had, but also his guide, literary counselor, and critic. Everyone who has written about the period has given due attention to the significance of their friendship for the publication of *Ritmos*, the only book by González published in his lifetime, and of *Poesías* in 1905. Not so well known, but perhaps equally important, is the *homenaje* of *Pluma y lápiz* which appeared on November 1, 1903, at the poet's death. For many readers who are not acquainted with Cabrera's editorial work, in fact, his aid to González constitutes his sole contribution to the history of Chilean literature.

Cabrera found a fertile field for creative editorial activity in the Sunday supplement of *La ley*, the "Anexo literario," published in 1898 and 1899. Bórquez' description gives a good idea of its scope and importance:

La idea fué exclusiva de Marcial Cabrera Guerra. Una vez a la semana, al número ordinario se le agregaban ocho páginas, formato Mercurio, de amena literatura, poesías y prosas de americanos, de artes y propaganda científica. El éxito fué completo: el «Anexo» era esperado con ansias y de provincias se pedían centenares con mucha anticipación. Sirvió de una manera decidida al resurgimiento de la literatura nacional. Admitía toda colaboración en que el autor demostrara talento, y dió a conocer a los mejores poetas y escritores de América. A tal «Anexo» dedicaba Cabrera todas sus energías y por esto él hizo un gran bien a la cultura de este país, y combatió de una manera indirecta, pero no por eso menos efectiva, el cretinismo imperante. Hizo conocer que la renovación literaria se verificaba en todas partes, en toda tierra hispanoamericana, que la idolatría por Núñez de Arce y Campoamor había pasado, que la trompetería lírica era molesta a los oídos modernos, que a la ramplonería de poetas hueros y versificadores melenudos había sucedido un sentido poético nuevo, una inspiración elevada y una renovación ideológica completa en materias artísticas.⁵

5. Ibid., III (Sept., 1926), 149.

The end of the "Anexo," like those of Santiago cómico and Pluma y lápiz, was mysteriously abrupt. Referring to it a few lines after the above quotation, Bórquez observed darkly that "en los compartimientos inferiores de la nave habían empezado a diseñarse mal encubiertas vías de agua." The end of the "Anexo" foreshadowed the split of the staff of La ley in 1899, when for a short time there were two different papers with the same name. Cabrera's, published in the offices of La tarde, was known to its friends as "La ley chica."

In his discussion of Cabrera's prologue to Bórquez' first book, Campo de flores (1900), the author attributed the delay in its composition to Cabrera's excessive activities—journalistic during the day and romantic at night. He indicated some doubt, furthermore, about the prologue writer's good intentions.⁷ Clearly the friendship was dissolving, and in his reflections on it after the lapse of years, Bórquez' clarity did not conceal a tone of martyred egocentricity:

El egoísmo más brutal y agresivo se me mostraba en todas partes. El mismo Marcial, que había sido bueno a las veces conmigo, se me revelaba en una forma desusada: su carácter se había agriado de repente. Y después cuando «Pluma y lápiz» no daba toda la utilidad que él soñaba, se hizo malo y fué cruel. Todo le ha sido perdonado por lo mucho que sufrió.8

A minor but bitter irony is that Cabrera's note in *Pluma y lápiz* expressing sympathy for the insane Colombian writer Juan Coronel should be prophetic of his own fate. In 1908, when his health had been undermined by an advanced case of syphilis, Cabrera was sent to the Casa de Orates. The date of his death there is given incorrectly as July, 1914, by Figueroa and by Bandrix in the *Mercurio*, but Silva Castro and Donoso give it as 1912.9

^{6.} Ibid., pp. 151-152.

^{7.} lbid., IV (May, 1927), 242. 8. lbid., IV (March, 1927), 58.

^{9.} See the Bibliography; Silva Castro's contributions to the *Diccionario de la literatura latinoamericana*: Chile, p. 83, and to the *Revista iberoamericana*, XXIV (July-Dec., 1959), 390; and Donoso's introduction to González, *Poesías*, p. xxv.

The article "In memoriam" in the second *Pluma y lápiz* in 1912 also indicates that his death occurred before that date.

Cabrera left very little published material in comparison to the vast number of hours of strenuous editorial work. Aside from his contributions—mostly ephemeral in nature—to the periodicals which he directed, he wrote only the prologue to books by Bórquez and Rocuant. Partially, the nonchalance towards fame was conscious and perhaps deliberate. As Bandrix phrased it, "jamás le preocupó el renombre literario ni la felicidad personal; escribió y vivió al día..." The same kind of direct and unselfish energy was applied to the most menial tasks of publishing and distributing *Pluma y lápiz*. Fridays and Saturdays were his busiest days, for he worked from five in the morning until midnight or later, packing and addressing the shipments for Santiago and the provinces.¹⁰

The greatest contribution that Cabrera made to the periodical, however, was the quality and the enthusiasm of the writers who were attracted to work with him. They undoubtedly felt what has been called "cierto magnetismo que atraía al seno de su bohemia a los jóvenes intelectuales de aquella época." The facilities were not great, certainly; the offices were installed in Cabrera's house on Calle San Carlos. Yet the spiritual rewards must have been considerable for the entire staff. Other writers than Bórquez have stated that Cabrera provided an indispensable contact with current French literature, and that in doing so, he opened up new perspectives and orientation to the younger generation. Perhaps just as important was the encouragement he gave to fledgling authors:

Lo quise y mucho...por su talento y por su bondad para soportar mis pesadeces y para aplaudir lo que no valía la pena de un desengaño o de una segunda lectura.

Era una especie de mamita a la antigua de toda aquella tribu volandera y medio salmantina....¹²

^{10.} Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías . . . ," Atenea, IV (March, 1927), 57. 11. Julio Molina Núñez and Juan Agustín Araya, eds., Selva lírica, 390. 12. Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza, Como si fuera ayer, p. 356.

In the center of all the activity was Cabrera who, as a catalytic agent, not only directed the periodical, but was actually Pluma y lápiz.

The review met with early literary, although not financial,

success:

La capital de Chile se asombra con esta revelación de una juventud mental vigorosa, moderna y sana, libre de prejuicios. Después comienza a pasar lista de presente en la revista la más prestigiosa falange espiritual de Hispano América. De este modo «Pluma y lápiz» educa el gusto artístico, ejerce una misión pedagógica de belleza, hace una labor social honrada y provechosa, y es en Santiago guía y enseñanza permanente. Su fama pronto fué a provincias y toda persona ilustrada o de buen gusto hizo de ella su lectura favorita.¹³

Something of the same has been said by all who have studied the periodicals of the time, confirming Donoso's description of it in relation to González, whom he first knew only as a contributor to *Pluma y lápiz*, "cosa que por aquellos tiempos equivalía a decir de lo mejorcito."

The origins of Cabrera's orientation must be sought in his editorial activity before 1900. This would include not only La ley, but also a periodical which served as a brief transition to Pluma y lápiz, Santiago cómico. La ley was limited by the requirements of a competitive metropolitan newspaper whose appeal to a segment of the public had to be based on purely political grounds. Pluma y lápiz, on the other hand, was unlimited by political considerations and by the pressures of daily publication, and the competition was less aggressive.

The usefulness of Santiago cómico as a testing ground for Pluma y lápiz is underlined by the short lapse of time between the former's demise (November 18, 1900) and the first number of the new periodical two weeks later (December 2). Santiago cómico had begun publication on October 7 of that year, using a large format in issues of eight pages. Its seven numbers included poems by Pedro Antonio González, Prieto Lastarria, Dublé Urrutia, Samuel Lillo, and Bórquez Solar. Writing under the name

^{13.} Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías . . . ," Atenea, IV (March, 1927), 57.

Guerrette that was to appear so frequently in *Pluma y lápiz*, Cabrera contributed one poem and descriptive notes on authors. The center of the periodical's attention, however, was directed to caricatures that, as was carefully explained, were artistic, not burlesque, and were intended as compliments. Three drawings that claimed attention as covers of their respective numbers had as their subjects Samuel Lillo, Dublé Urrutia, and González, the last in monk's garb smoking a cigarette, with the caption "Fr. Pedro A. González, poeta lírico y fu...místico." Even though its existence was limited to a few numbers, *Santiago cómico* must have provided its editor, at the very least, with literary and business experience that was to prove valuable to him in the efficient administration of its successor.

The first number of *Pluma y lápiz* appeared on Sunday, December 2, 1900, bearing the subheading "Semanario ilustrado—Letras y artes." Perhaps its most interesting feature, in addition to the prospectus transcribed below, is the small format (*cuarto menor*), an innovation in a literary review of this period. Pedro E. Gil recalled that only *Instantáneas* had experimented with this form before, in 1898.¹⁴

The prospectus, headed simply "Pluma y lápiz" and signed "La Dirección," was distinguished by the unaggressive desire for literary improvement and by the acceptance of the periodical's non-literary purposes that were to characterize its entire existence:

Por el anuncio de la prensa diaria de Santiago,—cuya amable deferencia agradecemos,—nuestro público está ya impuesto de la transformación operada en el Santiago Cómico, semanario del cual éste de hoy, Pluma y Lápiz, debe estimarse como la continuación en todo aquello, literario y de ilustraciones, que ha sido tan ampliamente aceptado por el público.

Cediendo a insinuaciones de dibujantes y coleccionistas y hasta del imponderable gremio de suplementeros, nos acogemos a este nuevo formato y prescindimos del calificativo «cómico», que parecía obstar, en opinión de algunos colaboradores, a la índole de un más selecto material de lectura y a ciertas ilustraciones de arte.

^{14. &}quot;San Carlos 639," Pluma y lápiz2, Number 4.

En este formato de 4º menor y en volúmenes de 16 a 24 páginas aparece, pues, *Pluma y Lápiz* para desarrollar un programa nuevo en el que, sin prescindir de las publicaciones cómicas y humorísticas, tengan también natural cabida colaboraciones literarias de género serio y grabados artísticos y de actualidad que algunos creían excluirse del material de una revista joco-burlesca.

El grupo de redacción y colaboración que presenta *Pluma y Lápiz* reune a todos los jóvenes escritores y artistas del centro intelectual santiaguino, sin que ello signifique que sus páginas quedan cerradas a todos los demás literatos y dibujantes que quieran allegar su valioso concurso. Por el contrario, anhelamos que aquel grupo sea el núcleo donde se congregue toda la noble cofradía literaria y artística del país, en el más amplio espíritu de unión y de entusiasmo.

Contamos también con la estimable cooperación de escritores extranjeros que en otras ocasiones nos han ayudado para análogas empresas, y cuyos nombres daremos tan pronto como obtengamos su expreso asentimiento para *Pluma y Lápiz*, y lo que es más eficaz, sus manuscritos de colaboración en prosa o

verso.

Innecesaria ha de ser la mención especial de los artistas, pintores y dibujantes, que nos acompañan en la tarea, ya que son los mismos que demostraron sus espléndidas aptitudes en las originales y artísticas caricaturas del Santiago Cómico. Hemos logrado todavía agregar nuevos lápices a este personal de ilustraciones y podemos garantir en absoluto que, a este respecto, el semanario Pluma y Lápiz no teme ser rivalizado ventajosamente ante el público cuya buena acogida espera.

Literatura y arte son nuestro campo:—todo lo que tienda a la agradable recreación intelectual y la sana alegría del espíritu. Con esto queda subentendido que prescindimos por completo de matices partidaristas y que queda proscrito cuanto no sea culto

ni agradable, es decir, todo lo grosero y todo lo tonto.

In its literary aspirations, *Pluma y lápiz* was noncombative if one compares it to *modernista* periodicals in other countries. Rather than a purely *modernista* review (which, in fact, it did not ever claim to be), it was a general review with several sections, including a literary one. The only note of the prospectus that positively relates it to the *modernista* movement is the final

paragraph, reminiscent of the challenging tone of Darío's "Palabras liminares" in *Prosas profanas*, which was echoed so often when the *modernista* crusade was at its height.

The list of editors and contributors was lengthy but perhaps misleading:

Redacción y colaboración: M. Cabrera Guerra (Jean Guerrette), P. A. González, G. Valledor Sánchez, D. Dublé Urrutia, J. Díaz Garcés (Angel Pino), C. Varas Montero (Cyrano de Bergerac), Benjamín Vicuña Subercaseaux (Tatin), R. Bascur Rubio, R. Prieto Molina, P. Rivas Vicuña (Perdican), F. Gana Gana, O. Sepúlveda (Volney), S. A. Lillo, J. Prieto Lastarria (Bleu de l'Isle), J. Vicuña Cifuentes.

Only those of Cabrera Guerra and González are customarily given a prominent place in critical discussions of modernismo in Chile. Samuel Lillo is not usually considered even on the fringe of the movement. In fact, when one reads his account of the early years of the Ateneo and of uncomplimentary caricatures of its founders that almost appeared in Pluma y lápiz, it is somewhat surprising to find Lillo's name here at all.15 Both Dublé Urrutia's work and his sentiments place him completely apart from modernismo. Of the other names given, only those of Díaz Garcés, Gana, and Vicuña Cifuentes can be considered major figures in the literary history of the period. Furthermore, only a few of the names given appear as regular and substantial contributors to the review. Possibly the list was compiled hastily from among the editor's acquaintances, who found some pleasure and no work involved in allowing their names to be associated with the new enterprise. The core of writers who really supported the periodical is not accurately reflected here. If the list had been maintained (it was dropped after a while), it would have had to identify regular contributors such as Manuel Magallanes Moure, Miguel Luis Rocuant, Antonio Bórquez Solar, Víctor Domingo Silva, Carlos Pezoa Véliz, Francisco Contreras, and Jorge González Bastías.

^{15.} Samuel Lillo, Espejo del pasado; memorias, pp. 159-160.

The foreign authors represented can be classified in two general categories, those whose contributions—optimistically anticipated by the prospectus—were sent expressly for publication in the periodical, and those whose works were reprinted from a variety of sources. It is no discredit to the first category to observe that the writers in the second were superior in quality and in literary reputation. They included Wilde, Benavente, Heredia, Baudelaire, Gourmont, Nietzsche, D'Annunzio, Heine, Ibsen, Wagner, Poe, Mark Twain, Catulle Mendès, Zola, Turgenev, Daudet, Gorky, France, and Maupassant. These were the great authors popular in the period—primarily writers of prose and primarily French. The writers of Spanish-speaking countries in the second category were Benavente, Guido y Spano, Díaz Dufoo, Julián del Casal, Manuel Ugarte, Vargas Vila, Nervo, Silva, Palma, Santos Chocano, Pérez Petit, Arciniegas, Tablada, Sawa, Díaz Mirón, Blanco Fombona, Icaza, Lugones, Rodó, Brenes Mesén, Urbina, Dominici, González Martínez, Gómez Carrillo, Gutiérrez Nájera, and Manuel Machado. With few exceptions, all of these were directly and strongly affiliated with the modernista movement in their respective countries.

The roster of foreign names is, on the surface, an impressive one, and justifies a high evaluation of the quality and breadth of the editor's tastes. Yet it could not be termed adventurous in any respect. Where is English literature represented except for Wilde? Although Poe and Twain are here, where is Whitman? Gourmont is present, but one misses the works of the later French Symbolists who were still attracting attention in Paris. In short, these writers, because they were amply represented in all modernista periodicals, might be called the standard consecrated writers of the period. It is interesting to note in this connection the number of selections—more than those by any author outside the Spanish-speaking world—by Catulle Mendès. This particular literary enthusiasm goes back sixteen years before the conclusion of Pluma y lápiz to the launching of modernismo in Chile, to the evolution and reception of Azul, and to the influence of the French

author on that work. Whatever its significance, then, the choice of this writer's work by Cabrera's colleagues cannot be attributed to a desire for novelty.

A comparison of *Pluma y lápiz* with two Mexican *modernista* publications of approximately the same period indicates that the translations in the latter were both more extensive and more varied. One-third of the *Revista azul*, for example, is devoted to translations. Some of the authors that are represented in one or both of the two periodicals but not included in *Pluma y lápiz* are Gide, Samain, Mallarmé, Maeterlinck, Moréas, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Huysmans, *et al.* The *Revista azul* contains, in addition to selections from two Americans, three Russians, and five Italians, the work of eighty-one French writers. The *Revista moderna* seems to have been more cosmopolitan than purely French in its selection, for it includes Swinburne, Beardsley, Ruskin, Rossetti, Nietzsche, and Wagner, in addition to a sizable number of Spanish *modernista* writers.

At the same time, due credit should be given to *Pluma y lápiz* for having any translations at all in this period. The prevailing atmosphere was unfavorable to literature in general, even (some would say "particularly") to Chilean literature. Translations into Spanish, usually imported, had very limited circulation, and there was no other periodical in Chile at that time that could be compared to this one. It is not possible to give Cabrera and his staff too much credit for introducing a cosmopolitan atmosphere that would otherwise have been completely lacking in Chilean literature of this period. Neither is it possible to calculate the ultimate effects of this cosmopolitanism in stimulating the imaginations of Chilean authors and elevating the standards of the reading public.

The writers of the Spanish-speaking world in *Pluma y lápiz* provide a contact with *modernismo* outside Chile. Here are all the precursors of the movement (with the exception of Martí); the poetic followers of Darío in Argentina, Peru, Mexico,

^{16.} The contents of Revista azul and Revista moderna are summarized in the article by Drothy Kress listed in the Bibliography.

Colombia, and Spain; and well-known writers of prose (Rodó, Pérez Petit, Gómez Carrillo, Ugarte). Other modernista writers, even if some have been ultimately evaluated as secondary figures, were young, promising, and of current interest at the time; their presence here is to the credit of the review. Indeed, the list of writers from Latin-American countries, with the sole exception of Ricardo Palma, who is sui generis, is composed exclusively of modernista writers. In this respect, at least, Pluma y lápiz may be considered the Chilean equivalent of the Revista moderna in Mexico or of Cosmópolis in Venezuela.

The frequency, source, and kind of direct collaborations help to delineate the scope of *Pluma y lápiz'* literary activities. These were usually designated by the phrase "colaboración extranjera de *Pluma y lápiz*." The first of these was a poem by Roberto Brenes Mesén from Costa Rica (March 10, 1901), followed by a poem by Luis G. Urbina from Mexico (April 7, 1901), one by Francisco Valencia from Bogotá (April 7, 1901), and "Baladas en prosa" by Leopoldo Díaz from Geneva (May 19, 1901). Amado Nervo contributed a poem especially for the issue of May 26, 1901, and Guillermo Valencia sent "Anarkos" from Rome for the issues of June 2 and June 9 of the same year. A brief article by Francisco García Cisneros from New York on Rubén Darío (June 9, 1901) was disappointing in its lack of up-to-date information on the poet's work and activities. José Juan Tablada contributed a story for the issue of June 30, 1901.

Although other articles by García Cisneros from the United States appeared in the issues of August 4 and October 13, there was a marked decline of foreign collaboration after the month of June, 1901. The next significant one was an article by Manuel Díaz Rodríguez from Caracas in the issue of April 6, 1902. A poem contributed by Amado Nervo was published in the issue of April 20, 1902, followed (on June 8) by an essay by Manuel Ugarte on Rodin, sent from France, and poems by the same writer (November 9, 1902, and March 1, 1903). This seems to be the last of the direct contributions from abroad, unless—which is unlikely,

given the explicit credits assigned to earlier contributors—the periodical dropped the custom of identifying these clearly. In contrast to the excellent and fairly frequent publication of unedited pieces which distinguished the first months of *Pluma y lápiz*, there is a decline in the number of such items after June, 1901. The editor had to rely more and more on reprints to keep his literary pages from being an exclusively national forum. Whether the decline was caused by a lack of literary contacts or by the difficulties of maintaining literary correspondence, or simply by the heavy pressures of a weekly publication schedule, there can be no doubt of the first intention of *Pluma y lápiz* to use original pieces from abroad.

In view of the periodical's cosmopolitan orientation, the silence regarding Darío's work and activities is strange. Twenty-four of his poems were published, to be sure, plus two articles and one story, in nineteen issues, but there was very little mention of his recent activities, especially if one bears in mind that it had been in Chile only twelve years before the founding of Pluma y lápiz that the movement was launched and received its first critical acclaim. The article by García Cisneros referred to above is the only one on Darío, and it is insignificant. In "En París" (April 13, 1902), César Zumeta mentioned introducing Amado Nervo to Vargas Vila in Darío's house in Paris, and recalled that Darío chatted with the other writers, but nothing substantial about the poet or his life in Paris was contributed. In the issue of September 14, 1902, there was a brief note on Manuel Ugarte's latest book, Crónicas del bulevar, with a preface by Darío, but again nothing of importance was said about the creator of Azul. This is not to suggest that there was any animosity towards Darío or any hidden cause of disagreement; it is only curious that in a periodical of modernista tendencies so little reference should be made to the poet whose acknowledged leadership of the movement was approaching its height in other countries.

This lack of attention to Darío was an inherent part of a gen-

eral relaxation of awareness of the movement, and part of this relaxation was the natural result of literary evolution:

El tiempo de la lucha es pasado, el bello tiempo de la lucha es pasado. Porque en Chile también tuvimos esa lucha. Comenzó en *La época*, prosiguió en *La ley* y en varias revistas jóvenes que tuvieron «la existencia de las mariposas».¹⁷

The combative tone of Bórquez Solar in the following was not only exceptional but also anachronistic:

He sido el primero en este país en levantar la bandera del arte revolucionario, en apartarme de la carretera del amaneramiento cursilón y falso de los académicos, del camino trillado, para laborarme uno propio por los atajos nuevos, inexplorados; que aun cuando no esté todaviá hecho del todo, tiempo llegará en que esté en definitiva concluido. Y por esto sólo he tenido que soportar las mofas de los imbéciles y los ataques de los hidrocéfalos de las mediocridades ambulantes.¹⁸

This suggests the cry of the *modernista* going into battle for the crusade of art. It was characteristic of the early phase of *modernismo* all over the Hispanic world, not excluding the mother country. That the combativeness gave way to a more peaceful stage, that the writers as well as the public grew tired of some of the mannerisms, was also indicated in *Pluma y lápiz*:

Después de centenares de volúmenes rimados, donde se descubre en los autores la preocupación de hacerse raros a toda costa, de llamar la atención con combinaciones métricas, casi siempre estrambóticas, calcando la manera de los poetas franceses e italianos ultra modernos, buscando en los diccionarios palabras exóticas o arcaicas, o usando metáforas abominables, es un consuelo dar con uno, que desdeñando todos esos fáciles recursos de retórica literaria, alcanza a veces, con la sola melodía del alma, sin línea ni color, la emoción poética. Y esto, no por escasez de fantasía, sino por exceso de fresco.¹⁹

The writer of the above, a little known member of the movement in Buenos Aires, was responsible, furthermore, for the translation

^{17.} Francisco Contreras (Guys), December 6, 1903.

^{18.} Bórquez Solar, Aug. 4, 1901. 19. Luis Berisso, Feb. 1, 1903.

into Spanish of *Belkiss*, by the Portuguese poet Eugénio de Castro, which caused a sensation in Argentina in 1897 with a profusion of the same devices and tendencies that Berisso is criticizing here.

The periodical's conscious adherence to the movement is indicated by two statements by Francisco Contreras, who wrote under the name of Guys. In the first he asked for freedom, and proclaimed cosmopolitanism in the best spirit of Darío. In fact, the following could be said to derive directly from Darío's introduction to *Prosas profanas*.

Y si es verdad que tiene talento, como le aseguran sus amigos, escuche este consejo que no es de un novel y que puede que le sirve. Olvide Ud. para siempre los «cánones» del R. P. profesor de Retórica, no vuelva a pedirle prólogos a Nercaseaux, no siga o persiga más a Núñez de Arce y Campoamor y demás de España. Lea Ud. a los grandes poetas franceses modernos: Víctor Hugo, Leconte de Lisle, Verlaine. Satúrese de las ideas y de las modas de los más geniales autores contemporáneos: Ibsen, Hauptmann, Dostoevsky, y D'Annunzio. Y ya con un buen bagaje de nociones de arte y con un concepto más amplio del teclado del verso, láncese Ud. en buena hora, láncese Ud. nuevamente a escribir, y verá cuán pobres le parecen sus versos de hoy y cuánta razón tenía un anónimo revistero de *Pluma y lápiz*. Y abur.²⁰

The second comment is a succinct and mature estimate of the legacy of the movement and at the same time a testimony to its continuing effectiveness at the end of 1903:

Parece mentira que en este tiempo todavía se hable de decadentes y se alimenten odios escolásticos. De lo único que con razón puede aun hablarse es de modernismo. Esto es, del movimiento de evolución del arte que aporta nuevas modas e inventa nuevas formas para encuadrar más fielmente el espíritu de la época. De las exageraciones de la lucha no quedan sino estas dos conquistas: la idea de la Libertad y el sentimiento de la Renovación. Y en tal sentido, no puede negarse, todos los jóvenes somos modernistas. Los que se resistieran harían el papel de químicos que buscaran en pleno siglo XX la piedra filosofal.²¹

^{20.} Contreras (Guys), Jan. 12, 1902.

^{21.} Ibid., Dec. 6, 1903.

These statements were exceptional in Pluma v lápiz. The above were the only significant references to the movement that the present writer found in 181 numbers. In reviews of books by modernista writers, in articles on French Symbolists, in commemorations of writers such as Gutiérrez Nájera, Díaz Mirón, and Silva, in miscellaneous columns of gossip, intellectual and otherwise, there were countless opportunities to make references to the group of authors and the characteristics that defined them as a separate school. These opportunities were consistently ignored. In fact, there was at least one case where a surprising lack of acquaintance with the movement was displayed in an article on the work of José Asunción Silva in the issue of September 14, 1902. The author of the article, Alfredo Martín Morales, implied that he had only recently become acquainted with the work of the poet (this in 1902) through a special number of La España moderna, which seems to be a roundabout way for the poet's work to come to Chile. Furthermore, his uncertainty about Silva's nationality ("creo que colombiano") indicated a greater ignorance of Silva's life than one would have expected at this time.

If this is a *modernista* periodical, why was there so little discussion of the literary school and so little expression of its possible historical significance? Several answers come to mind here, all centering upon the fact that the main battle of *modernismo* in Chile had been fought, decided, and discussed before the advent of *Pluma y lápiz*. The opposition to *modernismo* had not only been overcome but practically extinguished.

Furthermore, the generation of writers of *Pluma y lápiz* were all young men who began their literary careers well after Darío had left Chile. At the time when *Azul* was published, Cabrera was probably eighteen; Contreras, eight; Pezoa, nine; Rocuant, eleven; Magallanes Moure, ten; Víctor Domingo Silva, six; and Bórquez Solar, fifteen. They could well take for granted the achievements of the literary school dominant at the time of their apprenticeship as writers, be indifferent to its early history, and nonchalant in their contemplation of its future. The issues that they were to

define would be, not surprisingly, somewhat different from those that Darío had defined in Buenos Aires in 1896.

What, then, were these new issues that characterized the second period of modernismo in Chile as seen in Pluma y lápiz? Here one arrives at the great weakness of the periodical, for it contained no major literary issues, modernista or otherwise. Even if the periodical was not a purely literary pursuit, even if it aimed at the taste of the general public that it was trying to elevate at the same time that it achieved a certain commercial success, there should have been some literary discussion, debate, and controversy. But these were lacking completely. The prevailing atmosphere, at least as far as literary schools and generations were concerned, was an overwhelming intellectual calm. If it were not for the note of social protest in a few Chilean poems and in Valencia's "Anarkos," one could say that there was no ferment at all.

The writers who received the greatest amount of space in the periodical constituted the complete roster of modernista writers active in those years. There were a number of poems by González including the photographic reproduction of "El proscrito," and the homenaje already referred to. A fair amount of space was given to the work of Pezoa Véliz (fifteen contributions), even though he may not be considered the most typical modernista. One may also find examples of the work of minor writers such as Prieto Lastarria and Tondreau. But in general the chief beneficiaries of the review were Bórquez Solar, Contreras, Magallanes Moure, and Rocuant; including prose, their respective contributions numbered twenty-five, twenty, thirty-nine, and thirteen. Contreras came late to the review, appearing first in the issue of November 24, 1901, and then not again until June 8, 1902. Rocuant appeared early but dropped out early (with the issue of October 12, 1902), perhaps coincident with the publication of Brumas.

To the last four, *Pluma y lápiz* gave considerable encouragement by presenting their work repeatedly to the public. Poems published by Magallanes Moure and Rocuant were incorporated

into their first books, both of which appeared in 1902. Although Bórquez Solar and Contreras had already published their first volumes without the support of Pluma y lápiz, they were still young authors in need of publicity. The review also called attention to the books of all four in a direct manner. Campo de flores was advertised in the issue of April 21, 1901, with the statement that orders for the book could be filled by the office of the periodical. Cabrera Guerra's review article on Brumas occupied an important place in the issue of October 19, 1902. On November 23 of the same year, Osvaldo Palominos ("Gaston") wrote some very favorable lines about Facetas and also gave advance publicity to Contreras' Raúl, a section of which appeared in the issue of December 21. Luis Berisso published a letter, "Al autor de Facetas," on February 1, 1903, as did Enrique Crosa from Uruguay on March 22. Other items of literary publicity were an autograph letter from Max Nordau congratulating the author of Brumas (April 5, 1903), one from Condesa Pardo Bazán acknowledging receipt of Facetas, notes on the reception of Raúl (July 26, 1903), the prologue to Magallanes Moure's second book, Matices (November 29, 1903), and an announcement that purchasers of the latter who subscribed to the review would receive a discount. A Spanish review of Raúl was also reprinted (January 17, 1904). All of these, in addition to substantial accolades, such as Cabrera's article on Magallanes Moure (January 18, 1903), indicated that a writer genuinely esteemed by Cabrera not only received the hospitality of the review's pages for his work, but also the warmest and most useful kind of publicized support.

Parallel to the current of *modernismo* in the work of foreign and Chilean authors, there flowed an equally strong non-literary current of *actualidades*. The latter, clearly anticipated by the prospectus, must be considered one of the purposes for which the periodical was established. The words "Letras y artes," which formed the first subheading, soon became (in Number 7, January 13, 1902) "Artes-Letras-Actualidades." The subtitle, used for a long time, disappeared for a while and reappeared in the issues

of April, 1904, but the attention to actualidades continued consistently—more consistently than that paid to literary material, which ebbed and flowed.

The space devoted to current events may be classified under four general headings: obituaries, international events, Chilean places and people, and local and national events, including gossip. The first classification, which received prominent attention in the cover illustration or the opening pages of many numbers, constitutes a catalogue of distinguished men, particularly army officers and diplomats, who died during the time of the periodical's existence. Since death is always news, one should note only the prominence it received here in the form of lead articles. These presumably were often written by the director himself, although he did not always identify himself as the author.

The international events included such diverse subjects as the assassination of President McKinley, the activities of Chile's Minister Plenipotentiary in Brazil, the child chess champion Raúl Capablanca, Theodore Roosevelt, a special number dedicated to the people of Brazil (May 17, 1903), and a lengthy series of articles dealing with Russia, Japan, and the Russo-Japanese War. Many others from the international field reflected an interest in the lives of people prominent in diplomatic and political circles.

The articles concerned with Chilean places and people are of interest to the contemporary reader primarily for the photographs which illustrate them. Here there are such diverse items as a series on the nitrate mines and towns, Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza's description of Arica, articles on the achievements of engineers and doctors, and descriptions of the Cervecerías Unidas, Compañia de Crédito y Construcciones, and various other enterprises. Such articles had the not unpredictable effect of increasing circulation, particularly among the personnel of the companies described. This material was obviously an important part of the review's offering, and its precedence over literary subjects was shown not only by the greater space it received, but also by preferred treatment, sometimes with antiliterary effects. What

aesthetic considerations could have dictated the placing of a photograph of a bridge in construction in the middle of a delicate prose piece titled "El artista" (July 28, 1901), or the dedication of an entire number to the Compañía de Crédito y Construcciones? Where, with all the emphasis which *modernistas* placed on refinement and on rejection of the ordinary and commercial, would the Cervecerías Unidas have remained?

In the classification of local and national events—relatively reduced in comparison with the previous categories—belong such events as the death of President Errázuriz and the dedication of an issue to the new president, Riesco. General comments—gossip, weather, plays, homespun philosophy, women, the city—were contained in more or less regularly appearing columns such as "Charles domingueras," by Pedro E. Gil ("Antuco Antúnez") and, for Valparaíso, "Cosas del puerto" (later "Vida del puerto") by Víctor Domingo Silva ("John Pencil").

In addition to the *actualidades*, another non-literary feature was mentioned in the prospectus—humor. This was expressed principally by caricatures, generally of high quality. They constituted the most obvious legacy of the periodical from which this one evolved, *Santiago cómico*, but decreased somewhat in quantity with the passage of time. In this respect, what was art's loss was literature's gain.

To sum up the evaluation of the non-literary material, one may say that it was so extensive that it at times put the literary material in a purely secondary role, and that it was indicative of the variety of tastes the editors were attempting to satisfy. Rather than an anti-intellectual tendency, the non-literary material should be considered an indispensable element for meeting competition. If a statement in the issue of August 11, 1901, was correct, there were five other illustrated reviews in existence at the time, and the public's preferences had to be taken into account. Furthermore, of these there were only three that could be called vehicles for the "escritor de arte puro" around 1900, Instantáneas de luz y sombra, La ilustración, and Pluma y lápiz—each with an average

circulation of only four to five thousand. (The advent of Zig-Zag in 1905 with an initial circulation of 100,000 and an average of 30,000 to 40,000 marked a new epoch.)²² If Omer Emeth's remarks concerning the difficulties of publishing a literary review were accurate when applied to the second series of *Pluma y lápiz* in 1912, it may be assumed that the difficulties were even greater for the first series of the periodical:

Es menester, en efecto, ser hombre de fe y de valor para atreverse, hoy en día, a iniciar semejante publicación, cuando se sabe cuán escasos son los verdaderos amigos y favorecedores de la literatura y del arte nacional.²³

In any case, *Pluma y lápiz* was not to be accused of being an ivory tower publication, or of separating itself from life's realities. Perhaps *modernista* writers could charge that the review had sold out to the commercial enemy, but it is doubtful that purely literary material could have sustained a weekly publication in the early years of the century. For more than three and a half years, *Pluma y lápiz* appeared every Sunday in issues of sixteen pages until it reached 181 numbers. Only the compromise with the unliterary realities made such duration possible.

The articles on art, especially those contributed by Manuel Magallanes Moure, constitute a unique contribution. The following indicates that these articles are primary sources for any authoritative history of Chilean art in this period.

1/13/1901 Marcial Plaza Ferrand

2/24/1901 Nuestros artistas—Ernesto Molina

5/ 5/1901 Juan Francisco González

8/11/1901 Richon Brunet

9/ 1/1901 Ante un retrato de Nicanor Plaza

9/ 8/1901 Rafael Correa

4/13/1902 Simón González

2/22/1903 Rafael Correa

23. El mercurio, July 22, 1912.

^{22.} Fernando Santiván, Confesiones de Enrique Samaniego; recuerdos literarios, pp. 147, 151.

3/29/1903 Arte nacional—Un paisajista (A. Valenzuela Llanos)

11/29/1903 Plaza y Reszka

4/24/1904 Un nuevo artista—Sixto M. Osuna

5/29/1904 En el salón de París—Obras de Marcial Plaza Ferrand

In general, *Pluma y lápiz* amply fulfilled its purposes as stated in the prospectus, which was modest in scope and not too ambitious in expression. The adjective "comic" was not only dropped from the review's title, but also the comic features were progressively de-emphasized. Writers were, as promised, not only those of Santiago, but of the country as a whole and from abroad. Furthermore, the Chilean authors included a number having considerable talent who after their debut in this review were to go on to win for themselves a place of honor in the history of Chilean literature.

What conclusions can be drawn about the development of Chilean modernismo from the pages of Pluma y lápiz? First is the prevalence of a tranquil atmosphere in the literary world. There were no debates or manifestoes, and indeed, no controversies at all. These, of course, were not years of literary rebellion in the history of the movement in general, but a certain amount of ferment, of personal conflict, usually runs as an undercurrent in literary circles even if it does not signify a major change in taste. If there was any of this ferment in modernismo in Chile, it is not detectable here. Probably the calm was indicative of the serenity of the movement's old age in Chile, which is not to say that it was an inactive or unproductive period.

Second is the prominently nativistic quality of the poetic themes in *Pluma y lápiz*. Here there was little of the influence of *Prosas profanas* and of the highly mannered devices of the movement's full development—at least after the periodical's first year—although an occasional example, such as may be found in some of Contreras' poems, provided a flash of color and a whiff of per-

fume that was vaguely anachronistic. The themes that were most significant dealt with the Chilean landscape, the people who lived in it, and the symbolic value of their life. This aspect of modernismo, which Contreras called mundonovismo and which has been discussed in Chapter I as the development of criollismo in verse, was observable at various times throughout all of Spanish America. Searching for a typically American expression, this poetry concentrated on profundity of theme and depth of emotion rather than on experimentation in form.

Finally, one should note a curious mixture of cosmopolitanism and isolation. In spite of the praiseworthy representations from foreign literatures, the contributions from abroad, and the occasional tribute to a foreign author such as Hugo or Tolstoy, there was no feeling of being in close contact with the international community of letters. Reviews of books published abroad were rarities, and one misses the literary news of all capitals outside Santiago. Far from being attributable to modernismo, this lack of international contact runs counter to the usual characteristics of the school, which fostered interest in foreign literature, magnifying and glorifying every novelty, particularly Parisian novelties, to the point where national literature was occasionally neglected. The reader of Pluma y lápiz feels that modernismo in Chile evolved in a vacuum-incomplete with regard to Spanish-American countries and complete with regard to England, France, and Spain.

The conclusion of *Pluma y lápiz* was abrupt, and unless there is great significance in the omission of occasional numbers, unexpected. In the first years of its history, the periodical had an excellent publication record: only the issues of September 21 and 28, 1902, were omitted before the last quarter of 1903, when the numbers just before and after the special issue dedicated to Pedro Antonio González (i.e., October 25 and November 8) failed to appear. The issues of February 21 and 28, 1904, "a consecuencia del feriado de vacaciones," were omitted, as were those of March 13

and June 12, without explanation. The last number published was July 17, 1904 (Año IV, Number 181; Volume VIII, Number 3).

For lack of further information, the demise of the review could be attributed to simple financial failure. There was, however, a cryptic reference which suggested the existence of other factors. Pedro E. Gil stated that publication ceased "al golpe traicionero de un bellaco." Perhaps the villain was connected with one of the two periodicals that Bórquez Solar alluded to unfavorably:

La revista del pintor Melossi dejó de publicarse y entonces la demanda de «Pluma y lápiz» fué mayor. Parecía, pues, asegurado el porvenir de la bella publicación y el advenimiento a corto plazo de una mayor cultura. Mas, por desgracia, paralelamente, dos hebdomadarios que tenían pretensiones literarias, destruían en la capital toda labor artística, propagaban el virus maléfico, explotando la cursilería reinante en la más variada forma, fabricando literatura para modistillas, horteras y chimberos, la única que podían hacer sus infelices compaginadores. ¡Oh! nunca podrá ser abominada lo suficiente la obra de esos buhoneros literarios, desenfadados y audaces que no tenían más objetivo que ganar dinero, sin nociones de Arte, sin gramática y sin decoro.²⁵

The most appropriate tribute to the work of *Pluma y lápiz* came with a new periodical of the same name, which had a brief existence in 1912. Under the directorship of Fernando Santiván, with Daniel de la Vega as Secretary, it consisted of nine numbers from July 19 through September 13. Its format was the same as the old *Pluma y lápiz*, but the issues were larger (thirty pages compared to the former's sixteen), and its presentation more elegant. Although not a real continuation, it was the spiritual successor of Cabrera's review:

Para la moderna generación de artistas chilenos, pretende ser un hogar común, un lazo de fraternidad, una tribuna de amplia franqueza, como aquellas modestas revistas que dirigieron Cabrera Guerra y Augusto Thomson. Su mismo título, "Pluma y 24. Pedro E. Gil, "San Carlos 639," *Pluma y lápiz*², Number 4, p. 24. 25. Bórquez Solar, "Bizarrías . . . ," *Atenea*, IV (March, 1927), 57.

lápiz" pretende ser una evocación de ese pasado de sana, de alegre camaradería intelectual.²⁶

Some of the contributors were the same, particularly Francisco Contreras (writing from Paris), Víctor Domingo Silva, Manuel Magallanes Moure, Pedro E. Gil, Antonio Bórquez Solar, Diego Dublé Urrutia, Jorge González Bastías, and Jerónimo Lagos Lisboa (writing from Bolivia). Like its predecessor (but more oratorically), it welcomed all aspiring writers:

No admitimos jefes, ni credos religiosos, ni credos políticos, ni credos artísticos. Caravana de transeuntes en el desierto de nuestra patria, cada soldado será un general y cada general un soldado. "Pluma y lápiz" pretende ser apenas una carpa común que nos cobije del hielo, de las noches, tan pobre que su techo estará abierto y desgajado, y tan rica que por esa abertura contemplaremos las estrellas y el infinito.²⁷

In the first number there appeared a number of warm tributes to the work of Cabrera. Mariano Latorre declared that "en el desierto de la vida intelectual de Chile 'Pluma y lápiz' fué un oasis: allí fueron a albergarse los que, sedientos y cansados, cruzaban sin rumbo fijo en el arenal implacable, bajo el peso del sol ardiente," and Ernesto Montenegro wrote that "Marcial Cabrera Guerra ha de sobrevivir por la gloria de haber agrupado en un momento importante de la literatura chilena, a casi todos los jóvenes que comenzaban a revelar las primicias de un talento que después ha confirmado la certeza del juicio y la exquisitez de quien supo llamarlos a su lado." Francisco Contreras testified to his importance for the dissemination of Chilean literature abroad:

Marcial Cabrera Guerra: un gran luchador, un espíritu amplísimo, un artista refinado. Sus cualidades raras entre nosotros, no le permitieron triunfar en un medio en que imperan el mercachifle y el reaccionario. Mas en el extranjero adquirió merecido renombre. Cuanto escritor americano conocí en Europa 26. "Nuestra revista," *Pluma y lápiz*², Number 1, July 19, 1912 [p. 3]. 27. *Ibid.*

me preguntó por él. En cambio, por nuestros ídolos inciensados, ¿quién me preguntó?²⁸

Some of the prominent contributors of the new *Pluma y lápiz* who had not appeared in the old were Daniel de la Vega, Rafael Maluenda, Armando Donoso, Ernesto Montenegro, Alone, Carlos R. Mondaca, Eduardo Barrios, Samuel Lillo, and Domingo Melfi.

Although the new *Pluma y lápiz* carried some *actualidades*, it did not give them the prominence that it assigned to articles on cultural activities, and seems to have reduced them to a minimum. In addition to sections on art and the theater, it carried a regular column by Armando Donoso. Mariano Latorre's *Cuentos del Maule* began to be published along with the second number as a *folletín*. Number 3 had a new subheading, "Semanario de arte." In Number 5 Armando Donoso wrote on "Las ideas estéticas de Valle-Inclán." The editorial article in Number 7 spoke out strongly in favor of young writers and the need for having them represented on juries of literary contests. In short, the new *Pluma y lápiz* represented an extension in undiluted form of some of the best tendencies of the old. Unfortunately, its existence was too brief to enable it to make a major contribution.

Armando Donoso's indignation at a remark of Diego Dublé Urrutia indicated that *modernismo* was not yet a completely settled historical issue. In a letter to an unnamed poet (later identified as Allan Samadhy), Dublé Urrutia, at that time in the diplomatic service abroad, stated:

En Europa la poesía no lleva hoy ningún rumbo fijo. Ningún poeta grande se presenta. En España Rubén Darío ha conseguido decadentizar a los buenos españoles, movimiento superficial y sin ningún alcance que entretiene a los peninsulares con ilusiones de renacimiento.²⁹

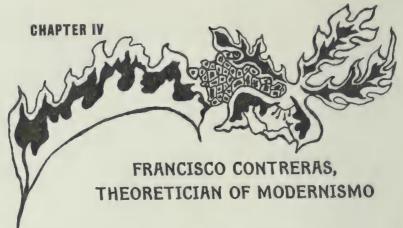
Donoso phrased a rebuttal in the following number (Number 6, August 23) with considerable heat, suggesting that diplomacy

^{28 &}quot;In Memoríam," *Pluma y lápiz*², Number 1, July 19, 1912, p. 18. 29. Diego Dublé Urrutia, "Rumbos literarios," *Pluma y lápiz*², Number 5, Aug. 16, 1912, p. 7.

was the ruin of literary talent and wondering whether it might be the cause of Dublé's conservatism. Donoso cited D'Annunzio, Maeterlinck, James, Kipling, and the Portuguese poets Eugénio de Castro and Guerra Junqueiro as outstanding writers whose work Dublé had not taken into account. And, of course, he was not prepared to accept the definition of Darío's influence as "decadentizar a los buenos españoles."

In the last number, dated September 13, an unsigned lead article anticipated the arrival in Santiago in a few days of Rubén Darío, an arrival that, unfortunately, never materialized. The article was a most enthusiastic welcome, with tones of the warmest admiration and respect. Darío's early career and literary success in Chile were properly recalled, and the awareness of the movement that Darío had launched was keener than any other references to modernismo in either the old or the new Pluma y lápiz. One can only speculate what the consequences might have been for Chilean literature if Darío had arrived and had stayed a while surrounded by the admiration indicated here.

But this was the end, of the second *Pluma y lápiz* and of *modernismo* in Chile. Darío did not appear to prolong the life of the movement. Other ideas, other currents, had begun to take its place. Many writers, like Donoso, could appreciate what *modernismo* had accomplished and could remind others such as Dublé Urrutia that their youthful work owed it a certain allegiance, but their appreciation became more and more historical, objective, and remote. The generation of poets that succeeded the writers of the old *Pluma y lápiz* felt no personal connection with the Chilean followers of Darío.



In the history of *modernismo* in Chile, Francisco Contreras is one of the most productive and least understood figures. Dedicated to the demands of what he considered his mission, a difficult person according to his own confession, misunderstood and envied more than any other writer of his generation, he has been the subject of many brief pieces and only a few serious articles. Now, when more than a quarter of a century has elapsed since his death, may be an opportune moment to assess his contributions to the movement and to evaluate his numerous literary activities.

A great deal of substantial background material is not available for such an evaluation. The chapter on Contreras in Armando Donoso's Los nuevos is indispensable to any study, although it covers less than half of the writer's career. Darío's essay in Todo al vuelo has little of consequence and assumes significance only because of the importance of its author. Manuel Ugarte furnished an interesting account in Escritores del 1900, but, like many others, he is too subjective in his personal reminiscences to clarify the author's contribution to modernismo. An article by Raúl Silva Castro points the way to a serious study of Contreras as a literary critic. The sketch published by Contreras' widow in the second edition of his Rubén Darío, su vida y obra is useful but unfortunately brief. The rest are for the most part circumstantial

^{1.} These works are listed in Appendix C.

pieces that are frequently informative, occasionally sympathetic, but always fragmentary.

Few critics felt, at least in 1913, as Donoso did when he wrote that "lo que él ha hecho por nuestras letras en América y Europa vale por todas esas huecas propagandas de chicos adinerados, quienes, en el mejor de los casos, no hacen más que apurar el ridículo en menoscabo nuestro, buscando amistades nobiliarias o de rastacueros dignos de vaudevilles."2 Yet Contreras received practically no reward from either private or governmental sources. Other countries, observed Donoso, recognized their able writers with brilliant diplomatic posts. Many critics regarded Contreras as more of a collector than a creative writer or literary analyst, or else dismissed him as having a weak temperament. His references to his post as editor of the Spanish-American section of the Mercure de France contain overtones of martyrdom ("Cuántas contrariedades me han dado mis diez y nueve años de labor en el Mercure de France," he complained in his biography of Darío), based doubtless on the real, if somewhat exaggerated, ill will of his contemporaries. His almost continuous residence in Paris after he left Chile was also a basis of reproach. Contreras' response was characteristic: "¿Volver? ¡Para qué! Desde aquí puedo servir a nuestra patria mejor que allá mismo. Sé que algunos me creen descastado; se equivocan."3

Contreras' defenders in later years repeated other complaints he had made. Articles on Italian authors (later included as chapters of Almas y panoramas) were sent to Zig-Zag, but the editor did not publish them. His novels on Chile, La ville merveilleuse and La montagne ensorcelée, were well received in France but generally ignored in South America. The government of Chile did not buy even one copy of his Le Chili et la France. There seemed to be a factual basis for an observation of Contreras in a letter to Roberto Meza Fuentes: "Creo que disfruto en Chile de

^{2.} Armando Donoso, "Semblanza," in Francisco Contreras, Luna de la patria, p. 12.

^{3.} Francisco Donoso G., "Au quatrième à gauche," El diario ilustrado, Oct. 2, 1927.

la más espléndida...impopularidad," as there was for Meza Fuentes' comment that Contreras was "perseguido por el sarcasmo, herido por la injusticia, lastimado por la incomprensión, atormentado por la ingratitud," and that some day he would receive the credit that was still begrudged him.⁴

When Contreras died in 1933, a partial rectification of former unfavorable judgments began, particularly with a group of necrological articles in Atenea, such as that of Arturo Torres-Rioseco: "Entre los poetas de principios de siglo ocupa uno de los lugares más altos porque poseía una cultura literaria más intensa y un gusto artístico superior." But in general the tributes did not go far enough nor did they bear critical fruit. Although some critics today will concede that he is a figure of major proportions in Chilean modernismo, the consensus of recent histories of Chilean literature suggests that he is a curious but second-rate writer in criticism as well as in poetry. Whether their opinion of Contreras is the cause or the effect of a general lack of attention to the second period of modernismo would be difficult to say, but the two are undoubtedly related.

Probably the two most significant events in Contreras' life were his arrival in Santiago and his departure from there for Paris. The former marked his acquaintance with the *modernista* world at an impressionable age when he was initiating his literary career. The latter, signifying the renewal of his dedication to his literary ideal, occurred just as *modernismo* was fading in Chile, and carried him to the still flourishing center of the movement in Paris. Although coming to Santiago to receive his education was customary for a young man in that period, it meant a revolution in Contreras' literary taste; although the move to Paris preserved the continuity of his literary career, it had a revolutionary effect on his personal life.

Francisco Contreras was born on January 21, 1877, in the family hacienda in the department of Itata. He spent his childhood in Quirihue until the death of his father in 1888. Precocious

^{4.} Roberto Meza Fuentes, "Breve paréntesis sobre Francisco Contreras," El mercurio, May, 1933.

intellectually, he wrote a quantity of ambitiously literary material at the age of nine. His mother moved to Santiago so that he could study humanities at the Instituto Nacional.⁵ Did he arrive there in 1888, shortly after his father's death? If so, the coincidence with modernismo is remarkably clear. In any case, it had to be well before 1895, when he wrote some of the poems of Esmaltines. At the age of eighteen, contact with Darío's poetry constituted a revelation for him, and he became the most ardent exponent of the movement in Santiago.⁶ His published contributions in the period before he left the country include not only two volumes of poetry, Esmaltines and Raúl, but also extensive collaboration in two short-lived reviews, Lilas y campánulas (1897) and the Revista de Santiago (1899), and one of considerable duration, Pluma y lápiz (1900-1904). He also contributed to periodicals such as La victoria and El día, both of Chillán.

Contreras' first book, *Esmaltines*, which according to its author and all subsequent writers was published in 1898, actually bears the date 1897, and its poems were written in 1895-1896.⁷ It was clearly designed to attract attention with its novelty, with exotic dedication of poems (to Príncipe Matiz, Señorita Primavera, Princesa Zafirina, Remember, and Nostalgia, among others) and with type printed in bright blue ink, a concrete reminder of the influence of both the content and the appearance of Darío's *Azul*. Darío's book, to be sure, is influential in Contreras' frequent use of the word "azul" as well as of other characteristic *modernista* words and phrases. In "Medalla" he openly notes the source which is felt strongly throughout the book: "Traspaso al tono azul de un *sonetito* en tono blanco de Rubén Darío."

^{5.} Andrée de Contreras, "Liminar," in Francisco Contreras, Rubén Dario (Santiago, 1937), p. 9.

^{6.} Or nineteen? Undoubtedly the work referred to by Sra. Contreras is Prosas profanas.

^{7.} Although it may be understandable when literary historians are wrong about a date, it is certainly unusual for the author himself to make a mistake. I am indebted to the kindness of Father Alfonso Escudero for the opportunity to consult this very rare book, which bears the following on its title page: Francisco M. A. Contreras V. / Esmaltines / 1895-96 / Tipo-Litografía Luis F. Rojas i Ca. / Argomedo 20 / Santiago de Chile, 1897.

The collection of sonnets and poems in the style of Banville and Gautier, then in vogue in France, was as well received by young writers as it was criticized by older ones and critics, a mixed reception which doubtless was gratifying to Contreras in his protest against conventional literature in Chile. By issuing a poetic challenge, parallel to the one that Darío had hurled in Argentina with *Prosas profanas* one year previously, the author of *Esmaltines* simultaneously introduced many of the devices of Symbolism to Chile, adopted a position of leadership at the age of twenty, and achieved a certain amount of notoriety. Max Nordau's general condemnation of "decadent" verse did not prevent him from praising the book with reserve in spite of its obvious sources. The approval of a writer of such international prestige was sufficient to guarantee the success of the work.⁸

Raúl was published five years later, December 1, 1902. Whatever attention it may have attracted at the time, it is a most rare volume today, and is unavailable even in some of Chile's finest libraries. A narrative poem in dodecasyllabic verse, it constantly reveals the influence of *Prosas profanas* and of Verlaine and Baudelaire. Its "Canción del Príncipe Zafiro," for example, could almost be a parody of Darío:

Dulce ondina, dulce ondina De mirada columbina, De divina sien lilial, Que en tu vitrio alcázar de ondas Tejes ricas blondas blondas Bajo frondas de coral.

The most interesting feature of *Raúl* is its preface, for it constitutes a manifesto in a movement that had very few. Although it is not, as Contreras thought it might be, the only manifesto of *modernismo* in America, it keeps company with Darío's preface to *Prosas profanas* and the article by Pedro Emilio Coll ("Decadentismo y americanismo" in *El castillo de Elsinor*, 1901) in a

^{8.} Armando Donoso, *Los nuevos*, pp. 62-64, and Andrée de Contreras, "Liminar," p. 10.

very limited group. For this reason, and because of the general unavailability of the preface, it is included here in the Appendix.

Throughout the preface to Raúl runs an awareness of modernismo as a literary movement, an awareness that was exceptional in Chile at the time of publication. The word "modernismo" is not used at all, to be sure, but "Arte moderno" or "Arte libre" have the same connotations. Contreras clearly felt that he spoke for a group of writers who created poetry according to a certain program that was concrete in its aims if not in its methods, and that the time had come to defend the program against the charges of its opponents. Specifically, modernismo had been criticized as artificial, exclusivist, and decadent. He set out to answer each of these charges as definitely as one could in a subject so close to the field of aesthetics, employing a tone of objectivity and serenity very different from the emotionalism of Dario's preface to Prosas profanas. As a semiphilosophical explanation of the bases of the movement, the preface of Contreras is not so much a manifesto as an apologia.

The motto, "Arte Libre = Arte Sincero," that serves the theme of the essay leads directly to the criticism of artificiality, which, like the others, is concomitant to the early development of modernismo in all countries. Sincerity, Contreras stressed, must be present with liberty in the new art; indeed, it was an integral and indispensable part of it. Unfortunately, there were writers who did not subscribe to this principle and who experimented out of simple curiosity or the desire to impress with novelty. For them, the most suitable punishment was rejection, which would come as the natural consequence of their work's hollowness. The converse was also true: experimental poetry that was sincere would automatically convince one of its integrity. The answer to the charge, then, was that experimental poetry not only could be but must be sincere, and that the reader should be able to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Another aspect of sincerity that Contreras referred to was its broad scope. Given the fact that the new poetry in its freedom

was designed to express all of man's feelings and not just those which were suitable to the requirements of one particular school, it followed that its very sincerity should make it complex. "Uno siempre es complicado para sí mismo," his quotation from an unidentified author, suggests that one must not equate sincerity with simplicity. What Contreras achieved, at least in his analysis here, was a reconciliation of sincerity with the guiding principle of modernismo, freedom of expression. For that time of subjectivism and negativism, inside and outside of Chile, his conclusion was truly modern, liberal, and constructive.

A similar argument was used to answer the charge of exclusivism: without the protection of a school, taste alone was to form the basis of acceptance or exclusion. The implication was that there always had been some sort of exclusivism in literature and that the new standard was essentially more fair than preceding ones guided by formal concepts of adherence to fixed precepts. Contreras thus pledged allegiance to the impressionism of Anatole France: "lo bello se impone, lo artificioso cae por su propia antipatía." According to this idea, a natural selection of values would be imposed, creating order out of the chaos imposed by liberty of expression.

If modernismo is criticized for being decadent, he stated in answering the final charge, one must blame society and not the poetry. A weaker corollary of the same concept suggests that since society is constantly progressing, the mingling of one art with another, indicated by Verlaine's dictum on musical verse, is a sign of maturity in literature.

In developing his ideas on liberty, derived from Remy de Gourmont and Mallarmé, Contreras interpreted them to include areas normally outside the stream of *decadente* poetry that was dominant in *modernismo* at that time:

Si bajo la razón de la libertad del Arte todas las escuelas, como entidades dogmáticas caen por inútiles, sus ideas todas son perfectamente aceptables como tendencias individuales del temperamento. Así el Idealismo, Subjetivismo y Arte por Arte serán propicios a los temperamentos reconcentrados, soñadores, enfer-

mizos o que toman sus inspiraciones del mundo interior, en tanto que el Realismo, Objetivismo y Arte Humanitario serán excelentes para los temperamentos observadores, altruístas o que toman sus inspiraciones del mundo exterior.

This comes as a surprise when we consider that Contreras' poetry at this time was strongly decadente and that his first two books reveal nothing remotely resembling "Realismo," "Objetivismo," and particularly, "Arte Humanitario." Contreras' definition of modernismo was roomy enough to include them all, whether he adopted them in his poetry or not. Even more significant is the fact that other writers followed Contreras who did successfully combine decadentismo with other tendencies different or even aesthetically opposite to it, particularly Pezoa Véliz and Bórquez Solar. Contreras thus provided in this preface a theory for a pattern that was to be one of the salient characteristics of the movement's later growth.

The preface to Raúl is important not only for its content but also for its mode of expression. After one makes due allowances for its author's youth, his lack of experience, and the desire, common to all modernistas, to épater le bourgeois, one cannot help concluding that the preface is a brief, logical, and systematic defense of the basic principles of the movement. Establishing liberty and tolerance as goals, to be achieved by sincerity and good taste, is also an answer to the critics of modernismo. The tone of Contreras' remarks near the conclusion, when he alludes to the fanciful and decorative preface that might have been expected of him, may well indicate the rarity of any serious and philosophical consideration of the subject: "Con lo cual ya podéis salir de vuestra estupefacción, jóvenes amigos, que esperábais que os hablara en este Preliminar del pájaro azul, del árbol que canta, o de la hija del rey de Thulé."

Contreras noted that Chile was slow to accept *modernismo*. There is no indication of date for the preface, which was written probably nearer the date of publication of *Raúl* (1902) than that of the poem's composition (1898). In any case, his characteri-

zation of Chile as "reacio" was measured against achievements of the movement as a whole as it moved across national boundaries. This view involved an objective historical sense completely lacking in Contreras' contemporaries.

Applying the above theories as a measure of the quality of the poetry in *Raúl* would have been embarrassing to Contreras. No matter how liberally one judges it, this book seems today a contrived effort in spite of its author's defensive assertion that the "estados de alma" it portrayed were real. Perhaps Contreras himself found that it did not measure up to the principles of the preface; he stressed its tentativeness as an "ensayo" and stated his preference for the newer poetry that he was writing in 1902. It may not be too severe, then, to consider the poetry of *Raúl* as only a youthful exercise.

The contention that Contreras was a pioneer modernista may be strengthened by noting his collaboration in three periodicals of the movement. Two of these, Lilas y campánulas (November and December, 1897, and January, 1898) and Revista de Santiago (August-September, 1899) were of very brief duration. His work in Pluma y lápiz, however, included numerous contributions over a period of four years. Since the details of the ephemeral reviews have been given in an article by Raúl Silva Castro, they are referred to here only to stress their importance as one of the earliest manifestations of combative modernismo in periodicals.⁹

Silva Castro has pointed out that the *Revista de Santiago* was much less elegant than its predecessor. Perhaps this plainness in form (symbolized by Contreras' using his real name instead of the pseudonym León Garcín) was compensated by some significance in content, for the second periodical displayed a strong proselytizing tendency:

En estos últimos diez años, cuando tan ardiente soplo de entusiasmo se ha apoderado de la intelectualidad latinoamericana, lanzándola en la senda de la innovación y del progreso, es verdaderamente lamentable que nuestro bello país de Chile haya o. See Appendix C.

permanecido como apartado, trabajando sí, pero en un aislamien-

to que difícilmente podrá ser fecundo.

La publicación literaria ilustrada que hoy inauguramos está llamada a servir de seguro vínculo entre el pensamiento de América, para que de una vez, conocidos y unidos todos los intelectuales, podamos proseguir unánimemente la edificación del soberbio monumento de las modernas verdaderas letras americanas.¹⁰

The purpose of this review, furthermore, was a threefold program to dissipate the isolationism of Chilean literature: to serve as the organ for literary youth marching to the ideal; to cement intellectual relations throughout Spanish-speaking countries; and to introduce the most celebrated writers of Europe and America. A concluding phrase seems derived directly from Darío's preface to *Prosas profanas*: "¿Y vuestras tendencias y vuestra bandera literaria? ¡Oh! ninguna!"

A short time later (in 1900) Contreras began what was to be a long association with *Pluma y lápiz*, contributing poetry and critical articles. Although his name was not included in the list of staff and collaborators that headed the first number, his contributions were more numerous than those so listed. As may be surmised from the titles and corroborated by examination of the poems themselves, Contreras' poetry is thoroughly *modernista* and particularly *decadente* in character. If the Spanish saying about someone's being "más papista que el Papa" were applied, one could say that Contreras was frequently "más modernista que Darío." In terms of both the quality and the quantity of the poems, then, there seems no exaggeration in viewing Contreras as the strongest link between *Pluma y lápiz* and the *modernista* movement.

In his prose contributions to *Pluma y lápiz*—all of them critical material, many of them identified only by the pseudonym "Guys" —Contreras inaugurated the kind of work that was to win him

^{10.} Revista de Santiago, Aug. 1, 1899, quoted in Andrée de Contreras, "Liminar," p. 10.

a reputation as the theoretician of *modernismo* in Chile.¹¹ As indicated in the chapter on *Pluma y lúpiz*, these show, with the exception of a brief article by J. U., the only significant awareness in all of its numbers of *modernismo* as a historical movement. In fact, it is particularly this awareness which makes Contreras' prose unique in this period. The constant reiteration of *modernismo*'s achievements as liberty and renovation, enunciated in the article of December 6, 1903, is the axis on which all of Contreras' later judgments of the period revolved.

The failure of *Pluma y lápiz* confirmed the public's indifference to *modernismo*, and the majority of its writers turned in other directions or fell silent. Only Contreras, more tenacious than the rest and, as Donoso described him, full of enthusiasm and faith, went to Europe. Possibly, also, the enthusiasm and faith which he displayed in Paris were the result of disillusionment at home: "Daba a entender que no le atraía vivir en medio de una sociedad que estimaba en poco los valores del espíritu." With the aid of some income from his family's land holdings, he left Chile in 1905 to embark on an entirely new and demanding period of his career.

If Contreras felt a personal indifference to his work and a general indifference to *modernismo* in Chile, both sentiments must have been dissipated with the cordial acceptance that he found in Paris. Donoso, in fact, states that Contreras' triumph there was rapid and almost without effort: his books were accepted and praised by writers of several nationalities, and he established friendships with Remy de Gourmont, Paul Fort, Jules Romains, Valle Inclán, Vargas Vila, Lugones, and Ingenieros, among many. Contreras also recalled the friendship of Marinetti and Apollinaire. The secret of his success was the combination of an unusual temperament and methodical labor. While others amused

^{11.} Contreras' articles and notes in *Pluma y lápiz* appeared in the following numbers: Jan. 12, 1902; July 27, 1902; July 26, 1903; Sept. 6, 1903; Nov. 1, 1903; Dec. 6, 1903; July 3, 1904.

^{12.} Armando Donoso, Los nuevos, p. 66.

^{13.} Armando Rojas Molina, Semblanzas, p. 120.

themselves in bohemian pastimes, Contreras locked himself up to work.¹⁴

The facts behind Contreras' appointment to the editorial staff of the *Mercure de France* have been somewhat obscured by conflicting accounts. Contreras' recollections, however, published as "Veinte años de crítica literaria" and aided by a letter which he had preserved, establish that he was named by Remy de Gourmont in December, 1910. The "Lettres Hispano-américaines" section of the *Mercure* had been in existence since 1890, under the directorship first of Pedro Emilio Coll and then of Eugenio Díaz Romero. Given the great prestige of the *Mercure* in Latin America, one can easily imagine the influence that Contreras was able to wield in his column, which appeared four times a year for twenty-two years until his death.

How did the high priest of Symbolism and the promising young writer unknown outside Chile come to be acquainted? Contreras' cosmopolitan literary taste was partly responsible:

Empecé a conocer literariamente a Remy de Gourmont en mis lecturas de la adolescencia. Con qué regocijo encontré en su disertación de "L'Idealisme" la norma tan buscada del movimiento literario que inflamaba en aquel instante a la juventud de América y que a mí me embriagaba, como un vino azul. Así, en mi estudio sobre el "Arte Nuevo" que puse al frente de mi poema "Raúl" (estudio que ha sido tal vez el único verdadero manifiesto del modernismo), lo cité y lo comenté rápidamente, acaso por la primera vez en América. 16

Contreras was fortunate that the object of his admiration was also one of the few French writers of the period really interested

^{14.} Armando Donoso, "Semblanza," in Francisco Contreras, Luna de la patria, pp. 9, 11.

^{15.} Armando Donoso states in two places ("Semblanza," p. 9 and *Los nuevos*, p. 66) that Alfred Vallette appointed Contreras to the post. Ramón Ricardo Bravo records 1909 as the date when Contreras was appointed. Both statements are at variance with Contreras' account of events.

^{16.} Francisco Contreras, "Opiniones y recuerdos: Remy de Gourmont," Sucesos, Nov. 24, 1919. He goes on to say that Darío had not included Gourmont in Los raros and that Gómez Carrillo had given him only a few lines in a note of Literatura extranjera.

in contemporary Spanish American literature. There were a few hispanophiles, to be sure, but their interests were all centered in the past. After Contreras sent Gourmont a copy of Los modernos, a book in which he followed for Spanish writers the pattern that Darío had set with Los raros, Gourmont made the offer. Contreras asked for a few days to think it over, and, advised and encouraged by Darío, accepted.

Among the immediate results of Contreras' new activities were the envy and enmity of a number of Spanish-American writers. Alcides Arguedas stated that when Contreras assumed his new post, a group swore not to send books to the *Mercure*, so that Contreras would be "como aislado y sin acción." Apparently this kind of enmity never died out during the critic's life. Gourmont informed him once with some amusement that some of his colleagues in Paris were discontented because Contreras reviewed only the books that were sent to him and, moreover, "porque no prodigaba el ditirambo." Contreras' reply probably analyzed correctly the basis of the complaints: "Maestro, es que nosotros los hispanoamericanos, como niños que somos, somos los seres más vanidosos del mundo." 18

It is significant that when Contreras sought advice concerning the advisability of accepting the post with the *Mercure*, a decision that was to be of great importance in his career, he went to Darío. He had followed Darío's work with admiration since his adolescence, but always at a distance until their paths crossed in Paris. When Contreras arrived there in June, 1905, Darío was absent; they met when Darío returned in the autumn of that year. Judging from Contreras' remarks, their first meeting did not impress the Chilean author favorably; in fact, he was "desconcertado." The second encounter, early in 1906, went much better. Instead of sullen and withdrawn, Darío seemed kind, cheerful,

^{17.} In his "Veinte años de crítica literaria," Contreras gave the source for this information as an article by Arguedas in *La ilustración* of La Paz, April 10, 1921. 18. Francisco Contreras, "Opiniones y recuerdos: Remy de Gourmont," *Sucesos*, Nov. 24, 1919.

and outgoing, and he presented Contreras with a dedicated copy of Opiniones.¹⁹

It was not long before the two became close friends. Since Contreras lived in a street near Darío's house, he saw him almost every afternoon, frequently at lunch or over drinks at the Café Vachette. They exchanged confidences, shared the same enthusiasms, reminisced about Chile (recalling its beauties and condemning its politicians), and, like many good friends, quarreled occasionally. Contreras was candid, however, in saying that the blame was not Darío's alone, and that he had temperamental difficulties of his own. Apparently these conflicted from time to time with Darío's well known weaknesses.

These differences, however, were minor, and did not prevent Contreras from taking a public stand to defend Darío on two occasions. The first of these answered an attack on Darío by Vicuña Subercaseaux in his *Literatos y gobernantes* (1907), in which he criticized Darío for the dissolute life he led. Contreras took advantage of a review of *Parisiana* in *Zig-Zag* to defend Darío, who was at that moment going through a period of regret and reform. The article provoked knowing smiles in Chileans who doubted that Darío's life could ever be portrayed as sober, serious, and industrious. Privately, Contreras also assured Darío that Subercaseaux had not a shade of literary reputation and simply capitalized on a distinguished name.²⁰

On the second occasion Contreras' opponent was much better known; Ventura García Calderón had attacked Darío in the preface to an edition of the latter's poems. Contreras' rebuttal appeared in the *Mercure* of May 1, 1921. In spite of the fact that it mentioned neither the title nor the author directly, it gave rise to what Contreras called a "panfleto inmundo" by the Peruvian author ²¹

^{19.} Francisco Contreras, Rubén Darío, pp. 119-120.

^{20.} Ibid., pp. 128, 184.

^{21.} See the footnote on page 19 of *Rubén Dario*. The correct title of the volume referred to is *Pages choisies* (Choix et préface de Ventura García Calderón), Paris, 1918.

Darío did a number of literary favors for Contreras, including a chapter on the Chilean author in *Todo al vuelo*. He was also responsible for Contreras' taking a new path in cultivating a poetic regional novel with his native Quirihue and other Chilean places as the setting. Darío had asked him to submit a story about Chile to *Mundial* (May, 1912), and was pleased with it. "De modo que debo todavía a Rubén Darío," Contreras wrote, "el haber emprendido la serie de novelas americanas en que estoy empeñado." When Contreras returned to Paris in June, 1913, he immediately went to see Darío, who congratulated him on another Chilean story that Contreras had published in *Mundial* (June, 1913), "La zorra bruja," and urged him to publish similar works in French in the *Mercure*.²²

The two writers saw each other frequently until Contreras left for Chile in August, 1911. Some months later, when Contreras, still in Santiago, heard reports of Darío's intended visit there, he published an article in Selecta on Darío's recent literary activities in Paris. But only Darío's empresario, Alfredo Guido, came; the poet's health did not permit the trip over the Andes, and he returned to Europe shortly after. They saw each other less often in Paris in 1913 than they had before. Darío was quite dejected and quite ill. Apparently they did not meet again after Darío left for Spain.²³

Contreras' life in Paris was a serene and well-ordered existence, not only without luxuries, but also with a monastic dedication to work that was in singular contrast to the bohemian life which most of the *modernista* writers adopted. Too, Contreras was married—to the sister-in-law of the *Mercure*'s secretary, Louis Mandin—and the majority of *modernista* writers were not. He lived in a modest apartment on a small income from his property in Chile. Surrounded by books, he read a great deal and kept up a voluminous correspondence. He never failed to acknowledge the

^{22.} Francisco Contreras, Rubén Darío, pp. 147, 150-151.

^{23.} Ibid., pp. 149, 151.

receipt of an item.²⁴ Pale, small, immaculately dressed, he gave an impression of physical weakness. Yet he had a *don de gentes*, and was as charming as he was stimulating in conversation.

Contreras' great literary contribution during these years—in fact, his unique contribution, for most of his books of criticism were compilations or revisions of his reviews—was his section in the *Mercure*. The very fact that it was a regular quarterly series distinguished it immediately from the contributions of his predecessors in the post. Even more important was the element of continuity that his authorship provided between January, 1911, and January, 1933. In comparison with the seven contributions of Coll (October, 1897, to December, 1898) and the thirteen contributions of Díaz Romero (from May, 1901, to January, 1908), Contreras' work is a mountain of material.²⁵

Another achievement of Contreras as the section's director was a notable broadening of literary horizons through a greater diversification in the books reviewed. Before 1911, the reviews, although interesting and convincing, were confined to fairly obvious choices, as might be expected if the reviewer felt limited in the space or number of issues available to him. This would seem to be the case for Coll, but perhaps less true for Díaz Romero. The obvious choices—that is, the works known and talked about by Spanish-American writers in Paris—provided poor geographical coverage, so that it is disappointing but not surprising to see no Chilean work reviewed before 1911. There was no Chilean writer in Paris to represent his country's case. The last lines of Coll's final contribution as director of the section (December, 1898) are significant: "Des pays riverains du Pacifique je n'ai reçu ni livres ni journeaux, et c'est pour cela que je n'ai pas eu

^{24.} Ernesto Montenegro, "Destierro y muerte de Francisco Contreras y Leonardo Pena," *Atenea*, XXX (May, 1935), p. 211.

^{25.} Díaz Romero published no reviews in the Mercure during 1907, 1909, and 1910, although he was still listed as the director of the section in those years. This could be the reason for the assertion by Ramón Ricardo Bravo ("Francisco Contreras," Sucesos, Oct. 30, 1919) that Díaz Romero had neglected his responsibilities.

l'occasion de parler de la vie intellectuelle dans ces régions." Contreras, in spite of also being limited to a certain extent by what he did not receive, had no need at first to make the fact known to the public, for he spoke often and well of Chilean authors.

Contreras not only broadened geographical coverage, but also reviewed the works of new, promising, and little-known authors, a procedure that his predecessors had been unwilling or unable to adopt. To do so involved necessarily a certain risk, since many of the "promising" authors never fulfilled their promise. Frequently, however, the gamble was successful; Contreras often reviewed first works of writers who were to become the leaders of literary generations. If the critic had been conservative in his choice, if he had waited for the consecration of the Spanish-American public at home and in Parisian cenáculos, the books selected for his column would have been much more consistent in quality—if we judge by the taste of the modern reader—and probably of much less interest to the modern critic. True to the modernista principle of eelecticism, Contreras constantly gave the benefit of the doubt to what was new and different.

Contreras expressed his adherence to modernismo by persistent statement of its principles while the movement was in vogue and equally persistent awareness of its achievements after the peak of its popularity had passed. Not only did he recall his youthful crusading zeal, but he even retained it in his columns as he praised the literary revolution Darío had led. The following example is typical. After stating that Romanticism and Realism had not made a great impression on Spanish-American literature and that therefore it was little better off in the nineteenth than in the eighteenth century, that is, condemned in its decadence to imitate classical models without achieving a personal expression, he continued:

Notre Révolution Moderniste devait par conséquent accomplir, outre la tâche du Symbolisme français, avec lequel on a pu l'identifier parfois, le travail accompli par tous les mouvements littéraires modernes y compris le romantisme. S'inspirant des maîtres modernes, étrangers, principalement français, les cham-

pions du modernisme (car si Ruben Dario s'imposa comme son chef, il y eut, dans chaque République, divers champions) leur prirent ce qu'il y avait dans leur oeuvre de réellement progressif et fécond: de certains romantiques, l'image inédite et les premiers essais de libération du vers; des naturalistes, le culte de la vérité et la notation des sensations personelles; des parnassiens, le goût de la couleur et de la plastique, et l'élargissement du vocabulaire poétique et de la rime; des symbolistes, enfin, le lyrisme pur et la métrique que l'on pourrait appeler harmonique. Ce fut un travail d'assimilation, d'adaptation, en même temps que de création, penible et tenace. Nous, qui avons pris part à la lutte, au Chili, nous pouvons le dire. Sans doute, on est tombé parfois dans des exagérations: dans l'imitation, dans la préciosité, dans le déracinement, mais le résultat n'a pu être meilleur: la modernisation de toute une littérature, car le mouvement triomphant s'imposa aussi en Espagne.26

Attention to modernismo in the Mercure began with Contreras' first contribution, in which he recognized that the new movement of the last two decades in Spanish America had not vet been revealed to the French public. His first mission therefore was to provide a rapid survey of the causes and nature of its growth. Although he did not yet employ the term "Mundonovisme," the concept begins in the vigor of his denial that modernismo was "Parisianisme," as had been charged. He agreed that at the beginning of the movement there was a show of pessimism and neurosis that was quite un-American, but that phase passed quickly, giving way to "le chemin de l'art original ou autochtone, interprète de la nature et de l'âme nationale ou continuateur de la tradition pure" (LXXXIX, February 16, 1911, 879). At times the references to modernismo were as convincing as they were concise: his tribute to Cabrera Guerra as a man who produced a great deal, but left no books, "mentor intellectuel de la jeunesse littéraire de son pays," or his assertion that Darío rated higher than Bello, Silva higher than Olmedo, on the scale of literary values.

26. Mercure de France, CXLIII (Oct. 1, 1920), 246-247. Subsequent references to this periodical will use only the first word of the title.

Contreras was wise enough, however, to take an historical approach to the movement, so that he could see it in perspective. If he had continued thinking too vividly of his youthful crusade for novelty in Santiago, if he had continued to dwell on the early achievements of Darío long after Darío himself had gone on to new accomplishments, his views on modernismo would have sounded anachronistic. Instead, he referred constantly to the movement as an introduction to recent creative accomplishments and described it as a necessary stage in the evolution of Spanish-American literature, not as an end in itself. The references to modernismo, furthermore, tended to recede into the background as the reviewer devoted himself to the development of mundonovismo, which he defined as a natural sequel to, rather than a reaction against, the earlier movement. Modernismo's achievements did not have to be spelled out any longer, but an unspoken appreciation of them constituted an assumption for a significant bulk of Contreras' criticism.

Although the references to *modernismo* diminished in the course of time, the support given to Chilean writers was unflagging. One of the charges most frequently made against Contreras was that he was a victim of *afrancesamiento*; another was that he was out of touch with recent literature in Chile. The alleged neglect of Chilean books, however, is belied by surveying the items reviewed.

With the exception of 1915 (did wartime activities interfere?) every year between 1912 and 1919 included reviews of Chilean books. Among these were not only literary works of Guzmán, Lagos Lisboa, Bórquez Solar, Magallanes Moure, Pezoa Véliz, Prado, and Barrios, to give only a partial list, but also non-literary works, such as Huneeus Gana, Cuadro histórico de la producción intelectual de Chile, and Vicuña Cifuentes, Mitos y supersticiones. In fact, whenever he reviewed a group of more than three books, there was likely to be at least one Chilean title. On one occasion, five out of thirteen books reviewed were from Chile; on another, four out of six. This same attention to Chile is reflected in the

two books of criticism based on his reviews. Five of the twenty-five chapters of L'esprit de l'Amérique espagnole are devoted to Chilean authors. In the third chapter of Les écrivains contemporains de l'Amérique espagnole, dealing with modern novelists, five of the eight writers discussed are Chilean.

Contreras' support of Chilean literature was qualitative as well as quantitative, so that he fortified his reviews with enthusiastic endorsement of particular authors. One is not surprised, then, to find the warmest praise for the poetry of Pezoa Véliz and González Bastías, as well as for the prose of Prado and Barrios. There is also a personal patriotic note occasionally, such as his assertion that Chile developed historical and didactic literature before literature of the imagination (the reverse was true of other Spanish-American countries) because it was the only country that did not have revolutions and that always maintained a stable government: "Cela est si vrai que, passée la première période, qu'on peut appeler la période de formation de la nationalité, oeuvre à laquelle tout le monde croyait devoir collaborer, le Chili a vu se développer, en prose et en vers, un mouvement artistique d'une remarquable intensité qui l'a mis au rang des premiers peuples littéraires du Nouveau-Monde."27

If the coverage of Chilean literature in the *Mercure* was not all that Chileans could have desired, Contreras suggested that the fault was not his, for he could not review books that were not sent to him. Mexican readers of the *Mercure*, too, must have suffered from wounded pride; an editor refused to review Contreras' *Les écrivains de l'Amérique latine* in *México moderno* because Contreras did not give sufficient attention to Mexican authors. It is, of course, difficult to find a measure of national esteem, but the reviews indicate that Contreras, far from neglecting his country's writers, went out of his way to praise them at every opportunity.

Contreras' final contribution to the *Mercure* was dated Janu-27. *Mercure*, XCVI (March 16, 1912), 425.

ary 15, 1933. In February he became ill, and died on May 5.28 His successor to the directorship of "Lettres Hispano-américaines" was Enrique Méndez Calzada, whose reviews first appeared in the issue of November 15, 1933, and continued to appear sporadically through 1936. Then, after a silence of four years, he contributed to the issue of May, 1940, and the section was discontinued thereafter. It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that given the tentativeness and brevity of the work of his predecessors and successor, Contreras contributed a chapter of twenty-two years in French and Spanish-American literary relations that was unique. His bibliography testifies that Contreras' influential position on the editorial board of one of the world's leading publications was of as much advantage to France as it was to Spanish America and to Chile. He was in every sense of the word what scholars of comparative literature call a mediator between two cultures.

The sole exceptions to Contreras' self-imposed exile were two trips to Chile in 1912 and 1919. Instead of contributing to his reconciliation with his country, however, they only served to increase the alienation that Chilean authors felt for his work and particularly for his personality, and consequently intensified the bitterness that he felt, a bitterness that was aimed not at Chile or its literature, but at its government officials. Perhaps only after his death was it admitted publicly that Contreras returned to Chile expecting to find an atmosphere of cordiality, and was painfully disappointed to discover that few noticed him at all.²⁹

An indication that the criticism he faced was personal rather than literary may be assumed from Santiván's recollections of the first trip in 1912. What impressed Santiván most unfavorably was Contreras' general air of superiority and condescension, ref-

29. D. M. [Domingo Melfi?], "Francisco Contreras," La nación, May 7, 1933.

^{28.} The *Mercure* reported that he was buried in Ribérac, where his wife had lived. The necrological article (CCXLIV, June 1, 1933, 501-503) also refers to numerous unpublished manuscripts. If these remained in his wife's possession, they may well be in Chile, where she is said to live now after remarrying. One of the manuscripts, "La ciudad maravillosa," may be of particular literary interest, since it was to include a description of Contreras' associations with *Pluma y lápiz* and with the years of *modernismo* in Santiago around the turn of the century.

erences to the younger generation of Chilean writers as "estos chicos," and the frequency of French interjections. His short stature, curved shoulders, and carefully manicured nails contributed to an impression of delicacy that was offensive, according to Santiván, who recalled in addition two mortifying anecdotes that reflected on Contreras' courage, integrity, and manliness. (Even before Contreras' death, however, the journalist regretted publicly the unnecessary hostility of such an attitude.) Others in the group which frequented the offices of the second Pluma y lápiz apparently shared this low opinion, which culminated in a violent conversation with Contreras. The latter's feelings of persecution, if the account cited is as typical as it seems accurate, had some factual basis. Shortly after the rebuff by Santiván, Contreras read at the Ateneo his "Luna de la patria," which came to be one of his best known poems and which has been interpreted as a love song to the country which had so poorly understood him.30

The second trip in 1919 confirmed the rejection of seven years before. The Chilean papers carried only a small paragraph on the social page announcing his arrival, a lack of attention in curious contrast to the dinner given in his honor in Buenos Aires on July 2, 1920, as described in *Nosotros*. A velada at the Ateneo was prepared but for some reason never took place. The tangible result of this visit, as "Luna de la patria" and the book of the same title had been a memento of the first, was La varillita de virtud:

Al llegar a la patria, el señor Contreras pensó en hacer conocer algo de esta labor considerable. Así, habiéndosele pedido que hablara en el Ateneo, se propuso aprovechar la ocasión para realizar su intento. Por desgracia, la sesión en que debía haber hablado no ha podido realizarse por causas que es enojoso explicar, pero que son enteramente extrañas a la voluntad de nuestro escritor. Entonces el señor Contreras concibió la idea de

^{30.} Fernando Santiván, "Algo de la vida," El sur (Concepción), July 27, 1930, and M., "Francisco Contreras," Atenea, XXIII (May, 1933), 479.
31. Jorge Solís de Ovando, "Del mundo literario," La nación, May 9, 1920.

reunir en un volumen las páginas que debía haber leído en el Ateneo y otras de sus libros inéditos....³²

In addition to his rejection by some of Chile's authors, he faced the rebuff of government officials. His most constant and urgent plea was for an honorary diplomatic post, which he felt he deserved for his years of service in promoting French-Chilean cultural relations. The government's refusal may well have been based, according to Raúl Silva Castro, on Contreras' refusal to enter a political tent. In any case, his bitterness increased with the passage of time, and found expression, direct and indirect, as digressions in his reviews in the Mercure. In reporting on a book by Magallanes Moure, for example, he suggested that the poet was not recognized as he deserved because he was Chilean and that writers in Chile were not given the high position that they received in other countries (CXXXIV, July 16, 1919, 345). Fourteen years later he was still singing the same "cantilena," to use Silva Castro's apt but unsympathetic word. Referring to the corruption of Chile's oligarchy by new wealth, he declared: "Un de ses derniers représentants, le président Sanfuentes, déclarait à un sénateur qui lui demandait un consulat pour un écrivain résidant en France qu'il réservait les postes consulaires aux personnes de sa famille" (CCXLI, January 15, 1933, 487). It is not difficult to imagine who the author in question was. He had more to say on the subject in the same article, the last of his career. After expostulating on the miseries brought about by North American imperialism, he criticized the Chilean government for allowing its creative writers to die penniless in exile: "On dirait que le Chili expie de la sorte ses péchés contre l'esprit, car ce pays a toujours adoré le veau d'or et a toujours dédaigné l'intelligence créatrice."

Contreras' disillusion was based on more than a disappointed ambition. His financial position became precarious when a tax

^{32.} E. E., "Advertencia proemial," in Francisco Contreras, La varillita de virtud, p. 20. The colophon of the book states that "este libro se acabó de imprimir en la Imprenta Universitaria de Santiago de Chile el 26 de diciembre de 1919 en un viaje del autor a su patria."

was passed on Chileans living abroad that affected equally the affluence derived from nitrate properties and the small income of a poet's inheritance. The crowning blow came when restrictions were put on money leaving Chile in any form. Contreras' protest, printed first in the *Mercure* of October 15, 1931, was as vehement as it was brief:

El gobierno de Chile que acaba de ser derrocado, gobierno que mantenía en Europa a muchos militares con sueldos cuantiosos y que envió el pasado año a Francia un embajador especial que no sabía una palabra de francés, ha sido singularmente injusto y duro con los escritores. Estableció un impuesto que afecta a los nacionales residentes en el extranjero y del cual los escritores no están exentos. De modo que los escritores chilenos que con su obra hacen en Europa la mejor propaganda nacional, están obligados a pagar al gobierno por servir a su país. Yo quería protestar aquí de tal injusticia, pero un profesor chileno que vino entonces a Francia me habló con tanto ardor de la buena voluntad del presidente, que preferí dirigirme a éste. No recibí contestación, y el impuesto en cuestión, lejos de ser abolido, ha sido aumentado considerablemente. Esperamos que el nuevo gobierno querrá hacer desaparecer ese triste testimonio de la incultura de la dictadura militar. Si no cree oportuno sin embargo abolir ese impuesto, que exente al menos a los escritores profesionales. Es una iniquidad, que sólo un dictador inculto ha podido concebir, el hacer pagar por residir en el extranjero a los escritores que sirven a su país en Europa, sin que ello cueste nada al erario nacional.33

When he reprinted the above in an article published in Chile after Contreras' death, Francisco Donoso speculated that the money must have been badly needed to pay the rent. The account of another friend in Paris at the time indicates not only that Donoso was correct, but that Contreras and his wife were in a desperate situation. In fact, with permissible rhetorical exaggeration, Carlos Deambrosis Martins wrote that the Chilean writer was killed by the Comisión de Control de Cambio. In spite of repeated requests, Contreras was not permitted to make any with-

^{33.} Francisco Contreras, "El gobierno de Chile y los escritores," El repertorio americano, XXIII (Nov. 21, 1931), 301.

drawal of his Chilean funds. He was forced to sell books, furniture, antiques, and art objects. When his illness became critical in February, 1933, and doctors ordered a change of climate, his friends requested an authorization for the release of 10,000 francs, a request that was cabled to Chile by the embassy in Paris. The request was never acknowledged by the Cancillería. When Contreras died, there would not have been enough money for the funeral expenses if a French association had not contributed three thousand francs.³⁴ Certainly the writer whom Vasconcelos called the "antiguo embajador de las letras hispanoamericanas en París" deserved more consideration than he received from his government.

An excerpt from Contreras' review of a book by Pezoa Véliz displays in reduced scope some of his contributions to *modernista* criticism. Attributing the bitterness of the poet to poverty and illegitimacy, and his taste for the beautiful and unusual to a naturally sensitive temperament, he found logical Pezoa's early attraction to *modernismo* in its voluptuous and bohemian aspects. But the poet had a second manner, Contreras observed, an autochthonous art, which was his response to nature and to native scenes:

La critique chilienne a surtout célébré en Pezoa le poète national; quelques jeunes gens aiment peut-être en lui l'aede symboliste. Quant à nous, nous optons pour le chantre simplement vital qui crea ces pièces d'une fraîcheur delicieuse, dans lesquelles defilent le champ, les animaux amoureux ou les jeunes filles aux yeux «de raisin vert», comme embués de la poussière cristalline d'un jour printanier.³⁵

There is no doubt here, as Silva Castro maintains about Contreras in general, that his criticism is superficial. But nonetheless, Contreras chose to extol a poet who was only beginning to be recognized as a permanent literary value. His praise of Pezoa, as ex-

35. Mercure, CVIII (April 1, 1914), 646-647.

^{34.} Carlos Deambrosis Martins, "El gobierno de Chile y la muerte en París del ilustre escritor Francisco Contreras," *El repertorio americano*, XXVII (Aug. 5, 1933), 73-76.

pressed in the lines above, not for Pezoa's affiliation with *modernismo* nor for a spirit of nationalism, but for the poetry itself, anticipated in some ways the recent re-evaluation of the poet on the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of his death. In this kind of writing, Contreras' criticism, in spite of its superficiality, convinces with its sincerity.

What is most significant here is the ease with which the critic was able to reject both *modernismo* and nationalism, the two main literary currents of the period. This rejection is perhaps most understandable as the logical extension of the literary concept of *mundonovismo*, a name which he invented for a literary current that stemmed from *modernismo* and yet was separate from it. The name, and the great attention he gave to the new "movement," derived from the importance which Contreras felt in locating, shaping, and applying the critical tenets of an art that would express completely the spirit of the Spanish-American world.

If one considers the height of the tribune from which Contreras spoke, and the great number of times that he alluded to *mundonovismo* and its implications, it is a little surprising that the word did not gain wider usage. Torres Ríoseco used it, to be sure, particularly in *The Epic of Latin American Literature*, as did John Crow in a section of Hespelt *et al.*, *An Outline History of Spanish American Literature*, and Erwin K. Mapes in his *L'Influence française dans l'oeuvre de Rubén Darío*. But the authoritative introduction of Onís' *Antología de la poesía española e hispanoamericana*, which discusses all the well known "-ismos" of the period, omitted this one, and the perspicacious Enrique Díez Canedo suggested that the label was the personal creation of Contreras and did not meet with general acceptance.³⁶ One writer became quite emotional in his rejection of the term:

Para colmo de desdichas, el señor Francisco Contreras se proclama además teórico del *mundonovismo*; neologismo ridículo que aspira a designar una pretensión no menos ridícula: la de añadir 36. Enrique Díez Canedo, *Letras de América*, pp. 99, 400-401.

un regionalismo más en el preciso momento en que se empieza a terminar con todos.³⁷

Contreras explained the meaning of the term often at first, but assumed in later years, probably to avoid repetition, that all of his readers knew the significance he attributed to it. However, even the best informed reader today, if he is unacquainted with the critic's early work, might be puzzled by an unexplained reference to López Velarde as "un mondonoviste des plus caractéristiques" or, in a review of *El cazador* by Alfonso Reyes, a statement that "avec la floraison occasionée par notre mouvement mondonoviste, l'esprit critique nouveau est apparu dans nos lettres en toute son amplitude."

One way of arriving at a definition of mundonovismo is to exclude what it did not represent. Several times Contreras made it clear that mundonovismo had been erroneously called americanismo, and that he would not use the latter term because of its confusion with the United States and because of its implication of a hemispheric literature. "Je désire signifier a la fois art de notre Nouveau-Monde et art du Monde nouveau, car tout cela doit être notre art" (Mercure, CLXIV, May 15, 1923, 248). Another thing it did not represent was the continuation of modernismo, or more particularly, of certain aspects of modernismo. Contreras' intention was in fact the announced aim of every literary generation from 1810 to the present: to create the art of the New World.

El movimiento que triunfa hoy en las letras hispanoamericanas, el Mundonovismo, tiende a adaptar a nuestro espíritu y a nuestro medio las verdaderas conquistas realizadas por el movimiento anterior, el Modernismo. No se trata, naturalmente, de instaurar un arte local o siquiera nacional, siempre limitado, sino de interpretar esas grandes sugestiones de la raza, de la tierra o del ambiente que animan todas las literaturas superiores, sugestiones que lejos de anular la universalidad primordial en toda creación artística verdadera, la refuerzan diferenciándola.

^{37.} Aníbal Ponce in his review of Contreras' L'Esprit de l'Amérique Espagnole in El hogar (Buenos Aires). Date unknown.

Se trata sencillamente de crear el arte del Nuevo Mundo, quiero decir, de la tierra joven y del porvenir. De aquí que denominemos este movimiento Mundonovismo y no Americanismo, como ha solido llamársele. En tal corriente, caben, por cierto, todas las modalidades. No importa, pues, que los poetas hagan lirismo de pensamiento, de sentimiento o de sensación: eso es cuestión de temperamento. Lo indispensable es que todo artista se manifieste sinceramente, esto es, como hombre del Nuevo Mundo.³⁸

Or, as the critic phrased it in his preface to Romances de hoy, the new way of writing was not an imposition of objectivism or social art, or a return to classicism, or a rejection of renovation, but simply an ardent love of liberty, a pagan cult of life or the desire for complete sincerity, all of which Contreras summed up in a motto, "La Libertad por la Sinceridad." The emphasis on sincerity recalls one of the author's main points in the preface of Raúl, and thus provides the continuity alluded to in the opening line of the paragraph quoted above. At the same time, he provided no way of measuring sincerity (as he did not in the preface to Raúl), or, in fact, of determining what "arte del Nuevo Mundo" might be.

Contreras furnished the best perspective for viewing mundo-novismo not in the pamphlet of that title (which is only an extract from one of his contributions to the Mercure and actually contains only two paragraphs of discussion of the "movement" in general), but in several pages of his book on Darío. Here he suggested that the new development began with the praise of the continental soul and of autochthonous literature in Rodó's "La novela nueva" (1897) and Ariel (1900). Darío, although he did not have as much influence on the new literature as he did on modernismo, showed the way for younger writers in his "Las ánforas de Epicuro" (1898-1901) and in Cantos de vida y esperanza (1905). With the latter work, and the example it set for writers who had been writing in the modernista vein and now shifted their orientation (without having to shift their allegiance to

^{38.} La varillita de virtud, pp. 101-102.

Darío), modernismo, according to Contreras, came to a close. The year 1908 marked the critic's attempt to define mundonovismo in the preface to Romances de hoy. After that date, he implied, the movement rolled along under its own momentum.³⁰

Two points make the concept of mundonovismo open to question: the frequent assertion that it is an independent movement, and the difficulty of defining it in anything more than vague and subjective terms. Contreras' vision of it as an autonomous movement is based on a separation from modernismo, although he admits that it has retained from the latter its emphasis on liberty and renovation. The elements which constitute for him the points of departure—the abandonment of the ivory tower and of highly coloristic and exotic decoration in favor of more sincerity, the attention to the native scene and to social issues—are, of course, well known and are generally considered characteristic of the later stage of modernismo. For Contreras, howeverand he accepted no compromise on this point—it was essential that these characteristics be grouped as a separate movement. In his view, modernismo was only the second period that the literatures of young nations pass through, cosmopolitanism; it signified the search in foreign domain for the cultural elements necessary to exploit American treasure: "Era indispensable, pues, un nuevo movimiento que reaccionara contra la actitud falsa del modernismo y adaptara sus verdaderas conquistas al espíritu y al medio hispanoamericanos."40 Therefore he wrote that mundonovismo was a new movement that had reacted against all that was exotic, artificial, and morbid in modernismo (Les écrivains..., p. 113) and that modernismo, like all illogical things, bore in itself the seeds of its own decay (Mercure, CVIII, April 1, 1914, 645). Certainly the opposite is implied of mundonovismo: it was by definition sane, healthy, and in harmony with its

^{39.} Rubén Darío, pp. 353-358. Contreras could also cloud the chronology which he had constructed. In a review in the Mercure (CXLV, Feb. 1, 1921, 829) he referred to Mundonovismo as "le bienfaisant mouvement qui commence de triompher en nos lettres."

^{40.} Rubén Darío, pp. 352-353.

ambiente. In any case, it was so different that it would have to occupy a unique category.

Although Contreras may be the only critic who separates the two as movements, perhaps he is even more vulnerable to attack for his vagueness of definition. The preface to *Romances de hoy*, which he cited often as instrumental in the development of the concept, is in itself loose, repetitious, and weak. The section that Contreras quoted from it in his biography of Darío (p. 353) said as much as the critic was able to say:

Conservando las conquistas de la libertad de los géneros y de la expresión, el gusto por la forma nueva y personal, todos deseamos sencillamente hacer vida o belleza en nuestro medio, tratando de crear una literatura propia, genuina, que encuadre nuestros nobles sentimientos de pueblos jóvenes y nuestros viriles deseos de progreso y mejoramiento social.

Although this statement may describe, it does not define. It would have been difficult for anyone except Contreras to read a given literary selection and to classify it as a part of *mundo-novismo*. What would place it in the category of "nuestro medio" and "una literatura propia" other than the critic's own feelings about the subject?

This vagueness is apparent, to take only one example from Contreras' work, in his general grouping of the *mundonovista* poets of Chile. Under this heading are poets of widely diverse tendencies (and talents), such as Pezoa Véliz, González Bastías, Guzmán, Mondaca, Gabriela Mistral, Meza Fuentes, and Préndez Saldías. A similar grouping of writers from several countries shows an astonishing variety. He also included in a list of works typical of *mundonovismo* Larreta's *La gloria de don Ramiro*, which was later analyzed at length by Amado Alonso as one of the clearest examples of *modernista* prose. If Larreta's work is part of *mundonovismo*, then one is justifiably perplexed in distinguishing the latter from the movement that Contreras claimed preceded it.

^{41.} lbid., pp. 354-355.

There is no doubt that for Contreras, however, *mundonovismo* was explainable only in terms of the preceding movement:

Ce nouveau mouvement [i.e., Mondonovisme] tend simplement à adapter au milieu hispano-américain les conquêtes veritables réalisées par le mouvement antérieur. Il a réagi, par conséquent, contre tout ce qu'il y avait dans le Modernisme d'exotique, d'artificiel, de morbide, tandis qu'il a employé ce qu'il y a en lui de neuf, d'ample, d'affiné dans l'interprétation de l'âme ambiante et dans la stylisation de la nature locale. S'il n'aura pas ainsi la gloire du Modernisme, d'avoir vivifié toute une littérature, il aura l'honneur de créer les véritables lettres hispano-américaines. De là vient qu'on l'ait appelé Américanisme, bien que sa dénomination juste soit «Mondonovisme». 42

So sincerely did he believe his own words, so deeply did he feel them, that he ended by rejecting a great deal of what he had represented in his youthful crusade for modernismo in Chile. Armando Donoso observed two parallel currents in Contreras, one beginning with Esmaltines in his youth and becoming stronger, with the influence of Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Mallarmé; the other beginning with Romances de hoy, "empeño fecundo por volver a la perdida espontaneidad artística y vigorosa."43 One could question the word "parallel" (is it not a change of orientation, even though traces of the early subsist in the late?) and furthermore suggest that the two were fundamentally opposed. A minor but clear instance of this is Contreras' occasional criticism of an author (e.g., his reviews of books by Max Henríquez Ureña and Emilio Oribe in Mercure, CXIX, February 16, 1917, 720-722) for exactly the things that would have endeared him to the critic when modernismo was at its height. This voluntary rejection of his own past may also be seen in his review of Eguren's Canción de las figuras:

A pesar de sus defectos, yo siento verdadera simpatía por él, tal vez porque me hace recordar al artista alucinado de *Esmaltines*, que yo era a los diez y ocho años. Me permito, pues,

^{42.} Mercure, CXIX (Feb. 16, 1917), 715-716.

^{43.} Armando Donoso, Los nuevos, pp. 100-101.

sugerirle que olvide sus "silfas" y sus princesas nórdicas, y se deje conducir por esas dos "sotas copa", que en uno de sus poemas, componen un licor endiablado; ellas lo llevarán al cuarto azul de la casa; el desván en que se amontonan las bellas cosas viejas de los abuelos: ahí encontrará la salvación, yo hallé ahí la mía.⁴⁴

Writing about *mundonovismo* as much as he did, and hearing perhaps only the echoes of his own voice, it is no wonder that he took a proprietary interest in a movement that may have belonged only to him. Thus he wrote in a review of Lugones' *El libro de los paisajes*:

Ainsi, M. Lugones affirme dans ce livre son attitude de poète mondonoviste inaugurée dans les *Odas seculares*, en sa modalité la plus directe: la stylisation de la nature du Nouveau Monde, domaine encore vierge pour l'art. Comment ne pas m'en rejouir, moi qui, dans mon éloignement, ai fait le possible pour fomenter le bienfaisant mouvement qui commence de triompher en nos Lettres?⁴⁵

Contreras' efforts in behalf of *mundonovismo* were fortified in the field of literature by a series of novels based on Chilean life which were never concluded. Although the three novels did not appear until 1924, 1928, and 1933, the composition of stories and novels with a Chilean setting was referred to by Armando Donoso during Contreras' first trip to Chile in 1912. Farts of these novels also appeared in numerous reviews. At one time plans for a series of ten such novels were announced, but the list seems to have been reduced to five; the unpublished *La ciudad mistica* and *La selva encantada* were said to exist in manuscript at the time of his death. The three that were published, receiving a warm response in European reviews, constitute the author's tribute to the country which he loved but from which he felt alienated. With the attention to detail that can be supplied better by memory than by observation, he re-created the landscape, acquaintances, and stories

^{44.} La varillita de virtud, pp. 113-114. 45. Mercure, CXLV (Feb. 1, 1921), 829.

^{46.} The third, La vallée qui rêve, whose last chapter appeared almost on the eve of the author's death, was published serially in the Mercure. See Appendix C.

of his childhood. "Ausente de Chile veinte años," wrote Gabriela Mistral, "él reproduce el objeto, la planta, el paisaje y la costumbre con asombrosa justeza y con una minuciosidad que yo, la olvidadora, le envidio." Only a petty critic could complain, as Pedro Nolasco Cruz did, that Contreras presented an unappealing picture of Chile to foreign readers. Contreras quarrel with Chilean politicians deepened his love of country at the same time that it increased his bitterness towards individuals. Even a superficial reading of his work makes one realize how much his country really meant to him and how much of this affection went into his Chilean novels.

Perhaps Contreras' greatest error in regard to *mundonovismo* was his insistence on viewing it as a separate movement. The weaknesses of such an approach are obvious; accepting it, one would have to look for the new movement's leader, followers, program of action, and rejection of the previous generation. Yet by Contreras' own statements, it is clear that the movement had no acknowledged leader (unless it was Darío), that many of the followers were also *modernista* writers, that the program was difficult to define, and that it rejected only certain aspects of *modernismo*.

Less obvious and more important, however, is the fact that mundonovismo represented an attempt to solve a problem of criticism that is still unresolved, the conclusion of modernismo. The change in modernismo proclaimed in the poems of Cantos de vida y esperanza is a concrete and readily observable phenomenon. The new facing of reality—political, social, and personal—can be seen in the majority of poems that followed this book, as well as in some written before. In many ways this shift in orientation is more accessible to observation and definition than the conclusion of the modernista movement as a whole, for modernismo entered like a lion and went out like a lamb. In fact, who can establish definitely a termination date for modernismo? By a kind of unwritten non-aggression pact, purely for purposes of convenience,

^{47.} Quoted in Andrée de Contreras, "Liminar," p. 16. 48. Review of *La montagne ensorcelée* in *El diario ilustrado*, Dec. 23, 1928.

most critics accept the date of Darío's death. Yet they would probably all agree that the vitality of the *modernista* generation had diminished before then; some would place the termination as early as González Martinez' famous sonnet twisting the neck of the swan (1911). But if the movement died at that time, then what succeeded it? The problem is complicated by the fact that, taken as a whole, poetry after 1910 evolved slowly, depending more on the dictates of individual writers than on the existence of schools.

Contreras' mundonovismo, even though time has not validated its independence, has the merit of resolving this problem, for it at least postulates a definite boundary for modernismo. As Contreras saw literary events, everything after the period between 1900 and 1905 belonged to mundonovismo. If this point of view can be accepted, it has the dual merit of limiting modernismo beyond dispute and of giving a name to the subsequent period, which has until now either been treated as a collection of generalities vaguer than mundonovismo or broken into atoms of "-ismos" in a variety of countries. Furthermore, the passage of years has provided a clear vision that was not available to the critic between 1911 and 1933. It is surprising that in the jungle of contemporary criticism Contreras should have been able to see at all, and it is very much to his credit that he could see clearly the path behind him. Not many participants in modernismo were able to see even this much during the first third of the twentieth century.

Contreras' achievement here is not as obvious as the weak-nesses of his theory: he had the courage to attempt the over-all view. Praising the advance of criticism within *mundonovismo*, he once defined it as the desire to get beyond "écrire une belle page à l'occasion d'un livre admirable" and to create values. ⁴⁹ This suggests the goal which Contreras had set up for himself. Although his concept of *mundonovismo* fell somewhat short of the mark, it was a valiant effort. The fact that he could make the mistake at all should add to an awareness of what *modernismo* really signified to writers of that period.

49. Les écrivains contemporains de l'Amérique Espagnole, pp. 145-146.

Another facet of Contreras' work, which is admittedly a minor one but which also illustrates further his close affiliation with modernismo, was his strong bias against the United States. In one of his earliest contributions to the Mercure, Contreras made clear his enthusiastic endorsement of the violent anti-American attitude expressed in Manuel Ugarte's El porvenir de la América Latina (Mercure, XCI, May 1, 1911, 214). The strength of Contreras' feelings was also revealed in another review in which he bitterly criticized not only the United States, but the author of the work, who had displayed moderation in his evaluation of this country (Mercure, CI, January 16, 1913, 431). Similarly he praised the Mexican periodical Cosmos for its clarity and boldness in protesting against the "civilizing" nation that lynched Negroes and professed the theory that the only good Indian was a dead one (Mercure, CVIII, April 1, 1914, 650). The last chapter of L'Esprit de l'Amérique Espagnole expresses the author's attitude under its title, "L'Amérique Espagnole et sa littérature en péril," and his last contribution to the Mercure devotes a considerable number of words to the effects of United States imperialism, including its unhappy impact in Chile (Mercure, CCXLI, January 15, 1933, 486-492). There is no doubt that time only strengthened an antagonism based on a hatred of imperialism.

A natural result of his mistrust of the United States was his criticism of Pan-Americanism, as expressed in his idea that "semejante pan no podía sernos benéfico, ya que la unión de un débil con un fuerte no resulta jamás equitativa." Perhaps less natural was the overflowing of his resentment into areas of literary criticism where he permitted the current of emotions to submerge his otherwise objective evaluations. He misinterpreted a statement by Isaac Goldberg to conclude that the American author, in reality one of the founders of Latin-American studies in the United States, was defending imperialism and hence could not be a true admirer of Latin-American culture. Contreras was

^{50. &}quot;Leopoldo Lugones," Zig-Zag, Dec. 11, 1920.

^{51.} Rubén Dario, p. 237.

even more unfair in attacking E. K. Mapes, author of a book that has become part of the foundation of scholarly criticism of Darío:

Il est regrettable, d'autre part, que notre auteur, qui montre en général une grande sérénité, de jugement, paraisse reprocher à Ruben Dario d'avoir interprété la clameur de sa race devant l'aggression étrangère, et qu'il parle, comme de sentiments injustifiables, de «la haine et la défiance» des Hispano-américains envers les Etats-Unis. S'il aime la culture de l'Amérique espagnole, comment peut-il se rendre solidaire de l'impérialisme de son pays qui tend à asservir ces peuples? Croit-il de son devoir d'approuver la politique de son gouvernement? Je peux dire que je suis presque toujours en désaccord avec l'attitude internationale de mon pays d'origine.⁵²

There was, of course an ample historical basis for Contreras' anti-American prejudices. Mistrust of the United States, in fact, was one of the unifying forces in the geographically dispersed literary movement. If there was one thing that many *modernista* writers—particularly in prose—shared after 1898, it was the protest against the menace of American imperialism. The fact that Contreras not only shared this sentiment, but expressed it as violently as the work of Ugarte, which he enthusiastically and unconditionally endorsed, may be regarded as additional evidence of his allegiance to *modernismo*.

After Contreras died, he received a belated and brief recognition in Chile, at least through the time in 1936 when his widow arrived to open an exhibition of his works. For a while a number of writers and critics shared the feeling expressed by the simple statement in *El mercurio* the day before the exhibition opened: "Sin pagar está la deuda que, sin saberlo, Chile entero contrajo con este generoso y noble espíritu." Valery Larbaud did not exaggerate in pointing out that Contreras not only contributed more than any other writer of the period to the diffusion of Latin-American literature in France and in Europe, but also introduced the new French literature of the period 1910 to 1930

^{52.} Mercure, CCXXXV (April 15, 1932), 483.

^{53.} El mercurio, June 29, 1936.

to the New World. He was, in the best sense of the word used by students of comparative literature, an intermediary.⁵⁴

There is a note of self-pity and of bitterness in Contreras' own summary of his work, but at the same time a dual virtue that should not be overlooked: to feel, as not all Spanish American writers did nor do, a concern for "la Gran Patria hispanoamericana," and to be devoted to his work for its own sake.

Amo la tierra donde nací, pero amo también la Gran Patria hispanoamericana. ¡Qué más me da que de mi América no me vengan estímulos y que en mi país deba pagar un impuesto por residir en el extranjero, donde cumplo, desde 1905, la labor que se conoce! Idealista soy. No trabajo por el oro, ni por la gloria.⁵⁵

Perhaps the final image of Contreras will be that of the patient, dedicated critic who served for twenty-two years as a self-appointed ambassador of Spanish-American letters. His work certainly is the concrete result of one of the principles of *modernismo*, "el Arte por el Arte," applied, amplified, and fruitful, long after the movement itself had faded into history.

54. Valéry Larbaud, "Francisco Contreras," Atenea, XXIV (July, 1933), 24-25. 55. Rubén Darío, p. 20.





APPENDIX A

FRANCISCO CONTRERAS' INTRODUCTION TO RAÚL

The following was printed as the preface to *Raúl* (Santiago, 1902) and reprinted the following year in the *Revista moderna* of Mexico. (See Appendix C.) No changes have been made in the text, except for the modernization of the orthography and the correction of typographical errors.

PRELIMINAR

El Arte Nuevo

Arte Libre = Arte Sincero

No sé por qué extraña aberración, en tratándose de arte moderno se habla de artificialidad y decadencia, de intromisión de un arte en el dominio de otro, de neomisticismo, de egotismo, de *snobismo*, de todo, menos del verdadero espíritu que informa este arte inquieto, refinado, vibrante: la Libertad, la suprema libertad.

Cualidad del genio artístico en todos los tiempos ha sido el rehuir la limitación de los modelos y de los dogmas para dar amplio vuelo al ave de fuego de sus sublimes concepciones; toda vez que las escuelas no han sido más que un resultado de sus ideas, adoptadas en abstracto por talentos de segundo orden: sus seguidores. El Romanticismo, en la edad moderna, vislumbrando que el Arquetipo y el Canon absolutos son falsos por contrarios a la ineludible ley de la evolución y a la relatividad de los temperamentos, empezó abiertamente el movimiento de la completa libertad del Arte. El Naturalismo, en seguida, avanzó un segundo paso, aboliendo los convencionalismos y las formas hechas en el estilo, que venían haciendo de los artes algo así como una cadena de círculos concéntricos. Regarded L'Inmortel de Daudet. Pero fué la juventud francesa fin del siglo pasado la que proclamó oficialmente, el imperio supremo del Arte Libre sin límites ni restricciones. Jean

Moréas, el paladín de la cruzada. Actualmente el reconocimiento de la libertad artística es un hecho en todas las tendencias, aún en las más opuestas, de las literaturas cultas: en el anárquico Simbolismo parisiense, en el Ibsenismo profundo y paradójico, en las ideas de los llamados «Jóvenes Alemanes» y hasta en el austero Tolstoismo, puesto que el Conde artista poco tiene que ver con el Apóstol crítico.

Asentado el pleno triunfo del Arte Libre, como una necesidad del espíritu moderno, tras la comprensión de la esterilidad de todos los sistemas de Estética, desde el de Platón hasta el de Taine, y de todas las escuelas, desde el Clasicismo hasta el Medanismo, el problema artístico, que tanto ha divido las opiniones en los últimos siglos, queda reducido a esta compresión sencillísima: «Libre desarrollo del temperamento creador.» Que es en esencia la idea de Remy de Gourmont. Esto es, completa amplitud de acción en el modo de ser íntimo de cada artista para la acabada gestación de la obra. No de otra manera que la flor ha menester aire y luz para entreabrirse gallardamente hacia el azur. De lo cual se desprende que la creación más artística será aquella que sintetice más fielmente, más intensamente, más sinceramente, en una palabra, el temperamento que la informe. Y que la obra de reflejos, esa especie de plagio que pretende confundirse con la asimilación, tan en boga entre los adocenados, es ciertamente la más completa negación de arte. Y aquí la razón de mi fórmula, que sirve de epígrafe a estas líneas: ARTE LIBRE = ARTE SINCERO. La pretendida obscuridad de la literatura nueva, que tanto espanta a los timoratos, es también un lógico resultado de la sinceridad artística: pues si es verdad que uno «siempre es complicado para sí mismo», será más sincero quien más vagamente, es decir, tal como están en su alma, vierta en el vaso de oro de la forma sus emociones. De lo que resulta que, si no a primera vista comprensible, esta factura, sugiriéndolo todo, será siempre sentida. La emoción por la sugestión. Tales, las ideas de Stéphane Mallarmé. Otra consecuencia del Arte Libre en extremo dificultosa,—a mi ver, lo que más enemigos le ha suscitado—es la «exclusión de las medianías», que dice Gourmont. Evidentemente. No existiendo ya el patrón del arquetipo ni el marco hecho del canon y, no quedando otro criterio o regulador que ése como tino del talento (del temperamento, dice Mario Pilo) que se llama Gusto, los artistas mediocres, sin punto de apoyo exterior ni interior, se perderán irremisiblemente en las sombras insípidas de las extravagancias sin trascendencias: y el cañamazo abigarrado de sus obras, que podría haber parecido correcto encuadrado en el esqueleto de la forma

clásica, dejará traslucir fácilmente los resortes de alambre del artificio y la falsificación.

Si bajo la razón de la libertad del Arte todas las escuelas, como entidades dogmáticas caen por inútiles, sus ideas todas son perfectamente aceptables como tendencias individuales del temperamento. Así el Idealismo, Subjetivismo y Arte por Arte serán propicios a los temperamentos reconcentrados, soñadores, enfermizos o que toman sus inspiraciones del mundo interior, en tanto que el Realismo, Objetivismo y Arte Humanitario serán excelentes para los temperamentos observadores, altruístas o que toman sus inspiraciones del mundo exterior. Y no os admiréis. Hay más aún. Si se considera con espíritu libre y diferenciador, todas estas tendencias, tan divergentes al parecer, en el Arte Libre se concilian y hasta se confunden maravillosamente. Vedlo. Si el artista ha de ser siempre idealista por cuanto la creación es tan sólo el resultado de una emoción anímica e individualista, puesto que debe formar una personalidad idiosincrática, (dígalo Nietzsche) y seguidor del arte puro, ya que bastará a conmoverle cualquiera manifestación de belleza; podrá ser también realista si su emoción es un resultado directo del mundo exterior, y objetivista si su personalidad le permite ver la vida no trastornada por sus estados de ánimo, y hacedor de arte humanitario si, para difundir sus ideas, elige los temas de que mejor se desprenda ese aforismo moral ineludible a todo fenómeno humano. Ejemplos: Hauptmann, D'Annunzio, Ibsen, Coloma. De aquí que la obra más perfecta sería aquella que sintetizase todas las tendencias, todas las ideas, todos los sentimientos, es decir, la obra que crease un temperamento universal. Esta es una idea mía. Pero, qué otra cosa significa, bien entendida, la teoría de la «Sugestión Universal» de Charles Morice?

Empero acaso se me arguya que el Arte Nuevo, además que por su tendencia de libertad, se le reconoce por su espíritu inquieto, místico, enfermizo, decadente; por el culto que rinde al snobismo, a la artificialidad, a la moda; por la tendencia a inmiscuir un arte en el dominio de otro, por su refinamiento, en una palabra. Sin duda alguna. Sólo que estas cualidades o defectos (como queráis) no son efectos del arte en sí, sino de la sociedad refinada, enfermiza, decadente en que ese arte se desarrolla. Detallaré. La tendencia al misticismo, al ocultismo, al refinamiento decadente es un resultado del actual estado de alma de la sociedad determinado por la reacción contra el abuso del escepticismo, de la ciencia desconsoladora, del naturalismo grosero. El snobismo, la complicación, el llamado modern

style, la moda en fin, resultado es también de la sociedad actual, puesto que toda moda no es más que un efecto del medio ambiente, ya que para ser más o menos duradera necesita entrañar el espíritu del siglo, el Viento Oriental de Schopenhauer. ¿Se me dirá que propiedad del talento es reaccionar contra el medio, como contra el atavismo? En arte, la mayor parte de las veces, no; pues si ello se hace posible en la lírica, en la novela sería, por cierto, inadmisible. Además, una literatura que no reflejase su propio medio, así sea ideológico, resultaría artificiosa, falsa, desprovista de interés. ¿No os parecería ridículo un arte eglógico en la refinada Bizancio, o un arte decadente en el robusto Siglo de Pericles? Ante este razonamiento la célebre Entartung de Max Nordau, como obra falta de base, cae. Pues si el furioso clínico austríaco percibe signos de insanía, de enfermedad, de degeneración en el arte contemporáneo, no debe atacar a ese arte, que no es más que un efecto, sino a la sociedad, el medio en que se desarrolla, que es la verdadera causa. Evidente. Cuanto a la escarnecida intromisión de un arte en el dominio de otro, o sea el empleo de la música y la pintura en el estilo literario o la introducción de la literatura en la factura musical o pictórica, a más de ser también un resultado del medio refinadísimo que pide más complexos efectos, debe mirarse como un último paso del avance evolutivo, pues el ir de lo simple a lo acabado significa mejoramiento y por ende progreso, evolución. ¿ No creéis que el arte en su grado supremo sería aquel que,

...Empleando algún proceso tan completo y tan profundo Presentara a un mismo tiempo todo el real cuadro del mundo...

como dice Julián, en El Puñal Antiguo; acercándose lo más posible a la curiosa utopía de Saint-Pol-Roux el Magnífico? En este concepto la obra de Wagner, el lapidarismo de los parnasianos, la Poética de Verlaine que aconseja la musique avant toute chose, los ensayos de instrumentación de René Ghil son grandes y atrevidos pasos de evolución.

Queda, pues, demostrado que el Arte Libre y Sincero asegura todas las idiosincrasias, admite todas las tendencias, concilia todos los sistemas. De lo que se desprende que la crítica dogmática a lo Morellet o Hermosilla, no tiene ya razón de existencia. El Impresionismo de Anatole France es el único sistema posible. Lo bello se impone, lo artificioso cae por su propia antipatía. Mas no penséis que esta especie de diletantismo tienda a llevar los espíritus de elección al escepticismo y al desaliento. No. Pues si como miembros de la comunidad artística

están obligados a admitir todos los modos de creación, como artistas individualmente, podrán alimentar sus desdenes, sus preferencias, sus entusiasmos. Y éste [es] el origen de ese sinnúmero de pequeños cenáculos, que tan presto nacen como mueren, cuyos carteles de pomposos títulos abigarran el ambiente del actual París literario y que no son otra cosa que la unión de unos cuantos temperamentos afines, más que bajo una idea estética bajo un motivo sentimental o teogónico. No obstante la libertad del Arte, los artistas, pues, pueden sustentar sus dioses, y sus templos y sus liturgias íntimas... Con lo cual ya podéis salir de vuestra estupefacción, jóvenes amigos, que esperábais que os hablara en este *Preliminar* del pájaro azul, del árbol que canta o de la hija del rey de Thulé!

Como dije al comienzo, el triunfo del Arte Libre es un hecho en todas las literaturas cultas de Europa. En América empieza también a serlo. Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera con la importación del Francesismo dió la primera palabra. Luego, la simiente ha fecundado. ¿Que se ha divagado mucho, que mucho se ha disparatado? Naturalmente. Ya sabéis que uno de los defectos de este arte es perder sin remedio a las medianías. Pero de tanto ensayo, de esfuerzo tanto comienza a surgir ya una Obra que empieza a atraer la atención europea. Chile ha sido uno de los países más reacios al movimiento. Yo de mí puedo decir que he combatido por las nuevas ideas en todas las ocasiones de mi aún corta carrera literaria; primeramente con la publicación de un libro lírico-obra de dieciocho años-plagado de pecadillos de juventud, que tanto espantó a les bourgeoises de nuestras letras; en seguida desde las páginas de La Revista de Santiago—que tuvo la existencia de las mariposas-en cuya Portada lancé una proclama de Arte Libre; y ulteriormente en cuanto arte he hecho o comentado en periódicos y revistas.

Tócame hoy presentar mi segundo libro, bajo un título correcto inventado a última hora...Y sin embargo, cuán distante de mi ánimo el cínico propósito de Baudelaire...Obra de veintiún años (1898), escrita sin una perfecta iniciación del arte y de la vida, este libro no debe ser considerado más que como un segundo ensayo, muy distante aún del Poema Definitivo. Si algún mérito posee será el del anhelo por reproducir con sinceridad estados de alma realmente sentidos:—vividos o soñados. Conforme a mi fórmula: Arte Libre = Arte Sincero.

Siempre los artistas han concedido mayor suma de atención y entusiasmo a la obra que crean en la plena posesión de sus fuerzas y de

sus experiencias. Tal lo que a mí me acontece respecto a los poemas que preparo. Séame lícito publicar este libro impulsado por ese sentimiento que nos hace recordar con placer a la amada de otro tiempo, que ya no nos cautiva...

F. CONTRERAS V.

APPENDIX B

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Pseudonyms in parentheses follow the author's name. Unidentified pseudonyms will be found interspersed with authors' names in alphabetical order. Translations are listed not only by author's name, but also by the name of the translator; for the latter, the designation (tr.)

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